

KLYTIA.

A STORY OF HEIDELBERG CASTLE.

BY

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FROM THE GERMAN BY

SUTTON FRASER CORKRAN.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

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K L Y T I A.

CHAPTER I.

DISTURBED by the heavy fall of the young maiden the bats flew out of the dark cellar and whirred wildly around. Toads crept from out of the swampy rain-sodden ground and crawled up the damp wall towards the opening. The terrified mice ran hither and thither. The moon had reached its highest point, and cast its cold rays through the square aperture on the humid wall. A violent pain in her foot aroused Lydia from the faint, into which she had fallen, and in the which she knew not how long she had lain. When she endeavored to stand up, she became aware that her foot was broken. Only half conscious of her position, she looked up through the shaft of the cellar, at the starry heaven above. The Lord on whom she had called for aid

had saved her from a hideous fate. "He will not suffer me to perish here," she said with the patience of a person afflicted with a serious illness. But the sight was terrible which the beams of the Moon now falling straight disclosed to her, as her eyes became more and more accustomed to the darkness. Dozens of bats flew noiselessly about in the dark. Horrible toads crawled along the wet walls. A rat ran across her face, so that she had to start up in spite of her pain to frighten the animal away. Overhead, all was still. Lydia reflected that her shouts would attract no one to her, except perhaps her pursuers. She therefore determined to husband her strength till dawn. She would then certainly succeed in making herself heard by some of the children picking berries, or by some of the numerous laborers. Anxiously did she gaze upwards towards the opening to see whether the cold light of the moon was not giving way to the warmer beams of the sun. Her back hurt her from having fallen against stones, the stinging pain in her foot caused her to sob, but she believed that she would be saved, and considered this as a punishment for the guilt which she had been induced to commit. How thankful she felt that her father was absent and

therefore not anxious about her. Thus thinking she fell asleep.

She woke, aroused by a stone which fell from above on her wounded foot. "Nothing stirs," she heard a boy's voice say. "I am here," cried Lydia in terror lest her deliverers should depart. "God be praised, young lady," cried a man's voice, "we heard no sound and feared our search was vain. Have you strength enough, to let yourself be pulled up by a rope."

"I doubt it. My foot is broken and my back is wounded."

"Then must we see if the ladder is long enough."

"But you promise to do me no harm?"

"Don't you know me, young Maiden, the Miller Werner from the Kreuzgrund, behind Ziegelhausen."

"Ah, is it you Father Werner," said she crying for joy. "How did you find out where I was?"

"The wretches who hunted you down, said, you disappeared from them here as if the earth had swallowed you up, so we could easily imagine where you were. The scoundrels would have quietly let you perish."

"Yes, it was terrible," said Lydia, "but God punished me for my sins."

The ladder was now let down through the opening, and carefully did the brave old man avoid touching Lydia. Then he himself climbed down holding a burning rosin torch. "A filthy hole, this old cellar," he murmured. "How the bats fly the light. Yes, light is horrible to you, you children of darkness." Carefully did he raise Lydia, who like a child wound her arms round his neck. Cautiously did he climb the ladder to the world above, where he laid her down on the soft turf. The question now was how to carry the sick child, who lay pale and faint on the ground, to the high road beneath. The Miller thought at first of using the ladder as a stretcher, and carrying her down on that. But the ladder was small and hard. To fetch a stretcher would have taken too much time and attracted attention. Lydia also begged urgently that he would hurry. Nothing remained but for the old man to carry her down in his arms, for which purpose he bound her to himself with the boy's girdle. The latter ran down to the village to have a covered cart in readiness below, whilst the father climbed cautiously down the stony footpath leading to the road. Lydia lay still, on the back of the miller, with her arms around his neck, while he sought

the most lonely path through wood and vineyard. "The lost sheep," he thought, "torn even to bleeding by thorns and its wool remained sticking to the hedges. But when the shepherd finds it again, he takes it on his back with joy." And he looked at the pretty white hands clasped so touchingly under his prickly chin. The sweet burden lay warm on his back, and the maiden's delicate cheek rested on his shoulder. Then the old gray-beard began to lose his head. It seemed to him whilst looking at those white hands, as if an evil voice close to him said: "Thy Martha never had such hands."

"What does that matter to thee, old sinner," he answered the tempter bravely. "Hast thou always lived among the purer brethren, thou would'st not care in thy older days to keep company with the coarser."

"To be waited upon by such hands, would nevertheless be pleasant," continued the first voice.

"Nevertheless thou hast still thy old wife," answered he gruffly.

"Have not Hetzer, Rottmann and other prophets taught, that when a brother felt, he had not found his suitable spiritual bride, he might loose him-

self from the older bond and enter into a new marriage."

"Let the disciples of Judas teach. Their end was like his. Old Martha entered the Baptist Communion with me and has ever been a true wife."

"Then take two wives, as permitted by the prophets of Munster. Had not the holy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Lamech, Gideon, and David more than one wife, why not thou also? It is true that the German princes forbade this to the brethren at Munster, but the Landgraf himself, who persecuted them with fire and sword, followed their example later on."

"Peace Satan," rejoined the old man. "Scripture is opposed to polygamy in spite of Abraham and Philip of Hessen. God gave Adam only one Eva. He created them male and female, not one male and two females. It is also said, 'and they two shall be one flesh,' and not three or four. But verily Martha is now nothing but skin and bones," he thought sadly and sighed.

"You must find me very heavy, good father?" said Lydia in a low tone.

"No," he answered shortly. Then he became conscious that he had better keep up a conver-

sation with his *protégée* than with the wicked Satan who would tempt him from the right path, and he told her how his son had informed him of the appointment made by Laurenzano, and how the rest had come to pass. Lydia began to weep. "So you know everything, and will certainly consider me very wicked."

"We are all but flesh and blood," said the Miller good-naturedly. "Our souls will stumble so long as they go about on two legs, and each bears within himself a rock of offence."

"I thank you father, for not punishing me more severely."

"That is not my office," replied the Baptist. "I have enough to punish in myself."

"Ah, you are good, but I dare not think what others will think of me."

"People must be allowed to talk, as geese cannot," rejoined the Miller. "Make your peace with God and then be satisfied. Look there is George with the cart."

Joyfully cracking his whip, stood the little devil of the previous night close to his horse. "Now we shall lay you down gently in the waggon and then close the linen curtains." Getting her down was

only managed with much pain and difficulty; then the well known Miller drove back unquestioned through the town to the portal of the Otto Heinrich building. The careful Barbara had seen the cart crossing the drawbridge and was immediately at hand. The Miller gave her no information. The young lady had hurt her foot falling was all he said, and carefully was she carried up the steps. Barbara by the Miller's advice wrapped the leg in wet cloths, till the father at his return at mid-day could apply a more surgically correct bandage. The brave Baptist had quietly withdrawn to escape being thanked. The father himself forbade his feverish child to talk, and appeared to be quite contented with the short account given by Klytia. It was sufficient for him that the cure proceeded satisfactorily, and the old Barbara scolded about the open turnip-pit in which more than one person had twisted his foot. When Erastus however asked later on for a more detailed account, he was surprised at his daughter's request to be allowed not to mention the cause of her accident. He shook his head, without however pressing his inquiries. "She must have come to grief through the fault of another," he thought, and was at last

glad that she spared him any fresh troubles, as his own business began to demand more attention.

Nothing was heard of Magister Laurenzano in Heidelberg, except that he asked for leave of absence till the re-opening of the College, and wished especially to be relieved from his office of preacher at the Stift.

In the bright town of Speyer with its own independent Bishopric, the throng composing the parliament was so numerous that any individual man was soon lost to sight. Any person who however might have entered Speyer cathedral at the hour of Vespers on the day on which Lydia was rescued, might have seen a young man clothed in black kneeling in the most abject manner before one of the confessional boxes most concealed in the gloom. His confession was at an end and the priest was earnestly addressing him. A woman kneeling close by heard the words: "Only a long discipline, my Son, can restore the equilibrium and order of thy disturbed conscience." From that time onwards for several weeks the same stranger might be noticed entering the cathedral daily at daybreak and at sundown and going down to the dark crypt under the chancel.

Thence he disappeared in a side chapel set aside for the use of the clergy of the chapter. "Where can Laurenzano be spending his holiday?" asked the philosopher Pithopöus at the round table in the Hirsch, who loved a rational audience.

"His brother says," replied Erastus, "that he is in Speyer, but I have not been able to hear a word about him from gentlemen who are there in the Kurfürst's suite, although I made all due inquiries."

"Very probably," answered Pithopöus, who liked Laurenzano for the interest he felt in scholastic discussions. "In the bustle which now goes on in that town, an individual is easily lost."

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Klytia was sufficiently restored to health to be able to sit up with outstretched foot on a chair specially constructed by her father, the visits of her friends who were most anxious to hear all the details of the accident began, thereby greatly tormenting the poor child. Frau Belier especially wished to know so exactly how it all came to pass that finally nothing was left for Lydia but to avail herself of Barbara's device of the open turnip-pit. Happily private affairs remained still uppermost in the minds of these busy women and maidens, and Lydia was endued with sufficient feminine cunning to parry a disagreeable question by referring to another topic. "I am nothing but a false serpent," she used to say reproachfully to herself, "and repay all this love with deceit." She received more visits than she cared for,—only one remained away, one whom she so much feared, one for whom she

so much longed. What could have prevented Paolo from coming to the very place chosen by himself? What prevented him even now from at all events asking her father about the health of his pupil? Had the miller not confirmed the fact that the note had been sent by Laurenzano, she would have preferred to think, that her rivals at the Stift had been making game of her, but after what the old Werner had told her she was forced to believe in Paolo's guilt. "He has no heart," she murmured, "otherwise he would have been here long ago." The less the news that could be obtained of him, the more did his conduct appear inconceivable to her. Had he quitted the town forever, in which he had caused so much misery? In that case he would never return! A feeling of horror crept over her at such a thought. Then she heard in the lofty echoing passage a well known elastic step and the voice of her father as he quietly approached. Erastus' head appeared at the door. "My child, Herr Laurenzano wishes to pay thee a visit. Remain lying down so that thy foot may not suffer." Lydia turned first pale and then red. At that moment she saw the figure of the architect, and with the disappointment her composure re-

turned. Smilingly did she stretch out a small white hand to the Maestro. After that the handsome dark-eyed Italian had congratulated her gracefully on her recovery, he told her, that owing to the state of her health he had not up to the present time occupied himself with the repairs necessary to be made on the row of windows of Erastus' apartments. If she permitted it he would now begin the work. Lydia thanked him for his kind consideration. The work would not disturb her in any way; she would retire to the back rooms. The architect looked as childishly sad at her, as would a boy to whom a long wished for pleasure had been denied.—That she should not deny herself the bright sunshine so necessary to every sick person, was the very cause of his visit, he began with hesitating voice and maidenlike blush. It would be utterly impossible for him to undertake the work with any comfort and happiness if he had hourly to reproach himself with having delayed her convalescence. He would in that case prefer leaving the windows as they were. Erastus smilingly sided with him; in short Lydia had to capitulate and agreed neither to leave the room, nor to shut out the health-bringing pure air.

Thus it happened that the merry Maestro appeared daily on the scaffold and seized every opportunity of coming to Lydia's window. He used then to tell her about the work, to complain of the laziness of German workmen who wasted half the day in eating, drinking and sleeping, and to praise the frugality and diligence of his Italian countrymen. Smilingly did the maiden bending over her work listen to the complaints of the Neapolitan, whose great delight seemed to consist in talking. As the neighbours however took to looking up at them, she reminded him half-seriously that he was no diligent Italian. "You say that a German eats and drinks as much as ten Italians, but it seems to me that an Italian chatters as much as twenty Germans. Now let me see for once how industrious you can be." Felix retired feeling rather ashamed, whilst she could not help thinking how much the brothers resembled each other. "I am afraid of the Magister," she thought smiling, "and yet long to see him. I am amused at the architect and yet dismiss him from me. Thou foolish heart to prefer sorrow to joy."

One morning the Maestro mentioned his brother to her. He was staying with the Bishop at Speyer

where he had some friends. It was then as she feared. He had become Brother Paulus once more and returned to the Jesuits. Sad, and with beating heart did she stoop over her sewing whilst two large tears fell on her work. The Maestro pretended not to perceive this, but whilst angry with Paul on account of these tears, he himself became suddenly aware of how his own heart yearned towards this beauteous fair maiden.

Klytia herself could no longer be in doubt, that the worthy Maestro, whom she preferred to any one after Paul, earnestly sought her love, but her heart was filled with grief for him whom now she must reckon among the dead. Had he not abandoned her insultingly to her fate, disgraced her in her own eyes, was he not continuing on his own crooked dark paths, and had he not ceased to love her if indeed he had ever done so? What would she have given, not to have been daily reminded of him by his brother, and yet she was never so attentive, as when the latter told her of his youthful days in Naples, how he, Paul, and their little sister had played at ball with the golden fruit of the orange groves, sought for colored

shells on the shore, hidden themselves in the hollow trunks of olive trees, looked for antique bits and marble splinters among the laurels and mountain-shrubs; of their adventures with huge earthworms, small snakes, scorpions and butterflies; then she saw standing out so distinctly before her the dark elder and the yet more swarthy younger brother, that she felt for them as a sister, and in her dreams she often imagined herself to be that deceased sister of the Laurenzanos. "Take the brown one, the dark one will render thee unhappy," had said the old witch, and Lydia had become superstitious since that terrible evening at the cross-roads on the Holtermann. The magic words of the old woman seemed to be too true. The maiden's heart could not free itself from the demoniacal priest, and it remained after Paul's faithless flight, in the trusty brother's power. Quite involuntarily, in her dreams, these innermost thoughts, still unknown to herself assumed expression.

Above the door of the Ruprecht building where dwelt Felix, might be seen a beauteous piece of artistic work of old German architecture, before which Lydia had as a child often stood in de-

lighted wonderment. Two lovely angels' heads mutually o'ershadowed by each other's little wings; holding in brotherly affection within a wreath of roses, a pair of compasses, the sign of the masons. The Builder's guild had evidently thus intended to go down to posterity. The common people however related, that these two lovely twins had been the delight of the architect who had built the Schloss. To have them continually at his side he had taken them up on the scaffold, rejoicing in his two fresh-looking courageous boys. One day however one of them stumbled and dragged the other down with him. The architect became almost deranged, so that the building did not proceed. Instead of looking after the work, the sorrowful father daily made a wreath which he adorned with white roses and carried to the cemetery near the Peter's Church where were buried his darlings. The Emperor Ruprecht however became angry at the length of time the building continued, and ordered the Priest, who had buried the children to urge on the architect. He answered that all was ready, but that in his grief he could not conceive a proper ornament for the gateway. The Priest exhorted and consoled him to the best

~~of~~ his ability; the same night the twins appeared as bright angels to the father bringing back with them the wreath of roses which he had laid that morning on their grave. When the architect was roused the next morning by the light of the rising Sun, he thought of his dream, it seemed to him that the perfume of the roses still filled his room, and on rising, behold there lay the wreath fresh and fragrant, which he had the previous morning laid on the grave of his little ones, and which he had seen withered the evening before, but the white roses had turned to red. It was immediately plain to the architect how he should decorate the gate-way. He chiselled his children as angels as they had appeared to him, bearing a rose-wreath, and in the middle he placed a pair of compasses, the symbol of an art, to which he now bade a lasting farewell. On St. John's day 1408, the key-stone of the gate-way was fixed in, and the Emperor Ruprecht himself spoke the dedicatory oration. When he wished however to return his imperial thanks to the workmen, the architect had disappeared. Whilst all the bells were pealing loudly and filling the Neckar valley with their deep notes, the Master whom they were honoring,

trod along the Michaelspath over the mountains to the monastery on the Heiligenberg. He became a monk and gazed from his cell at the tower, reared over the graves of his darling children, till his two boys once more appeared to him, crowned him with roses and bore away his soul into Abraham's bosom. This was the story as told to Lydia by her nurse, and when she thought of angels, the beauteous bearers of the wreath over the gate-way before which she daily passed always presented themselves to her memory. None of the noble statues wrought by Master Colins on the magnificent Otto Heinrich building had ever come near the impression made by these angels' heads. One evening after Felix had again been speaking about the games he and his brother Paul had played in their garden fragrant with roses at Naples, Lydia dreamt that night, that she was flying in the air above the Holtermann in the direction of the castle, and just as she was about to settle down the two angels of the Ruprecht building came towards her. The one was grave and cold, whilst the other which resembled Master Felix smiled on her joyously. Presently the one with the earnest, beauteous expression, which Magister Paul always wore when

teaching opened his mouth and said: "Take Felice." On this she woke up, hearing also the witch saying distinctly: "the fairer one is the right one;" frightened she raised her head from the pillow and saw how the moon shone clearly into her room. Long did she think over this wondrous dream, in which the dearest impressions of her childhood and the terrible experiences of the previous weeks were so mixed together, then she fell asleep once more. The following morning she could not withstand the temptation of seeing whether the two angels' heads really resembled the brothers? Everything was quiet and peaceful in the court. This was the first time she had ventured out since her accident. She took a glass to draw water from the well-house, supported by the pillars taken from Charlemagne's palace in the Palatinate near Ingelheim. Whilst lowering the bucket she gazed at the beloved images at her ease. No one was there to disturb her at her early task. The glass filled with the pure water of the well sparkled in her hand. Clear shone the morning-sun on the Ruprecht building, and to see the images better the maiden was forced to approach closer. She protected her eyes against the light

with her hand and looked intently at the well-known figures. Gently and kindly seemed the angels to smile back on her. The younger one to the left might stand for the grave Paolo, the older one to the right the joyous artist. Right! "He is the right one," the words of the witch kept dinning in her ears. And did not the compasses in the middle refer to Felice's art? Not the breviary, but the implement of the Maestro is surrounded by the roses of love. "But they are both clad as choir-boys." The thought distracted her. The angels' heads seemed to float, to nod to her, to greet her. Dazzled by the light it seemed to her confused eyes as if the wreath were coming away. Suddenly a full blown rose fell at her feet. Surprised she looked around whether she could see anyone. She picked up the flower. It was the same kind of deep-red rose as was sculptured on the wreath round the angels. With a feeling akin to superstition she looked up to see whether the beautiful rose had not fallen out of the wreath encircling the lovely children? But none was missing. The windows on the whole of that side were closed, with the exception of a single one, and that belonged to Felice's room. Smilingly she

placed the flower in her glass, and hurried back as fast as her lame foot would permit, for just at that moment a servant maid inclined to question her about her early appearance in the court came out of the house. She did not however feel attracted towards the "red-haired Frances," who in admiration for the rose pressed too familiarly at her side.

Lydia felt mentally and morally perplexed and confused. She could not bring herself to see in her wondrous dream and the extraordinary morning salutation received on her first appearance abroad a mere accident. Thus she sat, dreamingly pondering over these events near her seat at the window, when her father entered and for the first time alluded to her relations with Felix. He praised the architect's knowledge of art and lofty sentiments, he reminded her that though he himself was not so old, yet he was in delicate health and wearied of work. What would become of her, if it pleased God to call him suddenly away, he asked. Lydia wiped her eyes and kissed her beloved father. Erastus did not insist on an answer, but he left her in sweet confusion once more alone in her room, she looked more kindly at the rose and said to

herself, "God must know why it is better thus. The demoniacal attraction for the Magister has precipitated me in the fullest sense into an abyss, the more quiet sympathy of the kindly Maestro has guided my feet not to serpents, but to roses," and blushing she bent her face over the flower and inhaled deep draughts of its perfume.

That very morning Felix had proceeded so far with his work as to have reached Lydia's window. He noticed his rose on her table in the glass of water and looked gratefully at the maiden. Then he set to work repairing the cornices and pilasters over Lydia's window, and it seemed as if these required the most strict attention, the work took so long completing. In the meanwhile the Maestro related amusing anecdotes to the fair patient, who sat sometimes at the window, at other times supported on a pillow she stretched out her injured foot, and however timid Lydia had felt in the presence of the Magister, she did not let herself be overwhelmed in any way by his chatty brother. It was a proud feeling for her to be thus able to completely subjugate such a man, for a handsome horse renders even a timid rider bold and blithe-

some. "I wish Signorina," he said, "you would advise me about my work; Master Colin's figures seem to me, if I only look in at your window, to become daily stiffer and more inanimate. To you who live now so long under them, have not the aged gentlemen perhaps confided some secrets of their inner life, to which I could give expression on their empty faces?"

"O yes," said Lydia seriously. "Quiet nights they have great quarrels."

"They quarrel, *corpo di Venere*, you must tell me about this."

"No, I do not betray the secrets of the companions of my home."

"But you nevertheless say, that they quarrel."

"Are you astonished at that? You must see for yourself that they are not on a friendly footing."

As Lydia remained firm in refusing to betray the quarrels of the Statues, Felix rubbed his brows. "As a fact I remember that I myself fell once asleep up here. If I relate to you what I heard in my dreams, you must also tell me what you overheard."

"Perhaps," said Klytia, "let me only hear your story."

"I had been thinking of a fair-haired angel, who dwelt higher than many planets, and soon began to nod." "The angel thanks you," interrupted Klytia pertly. "After a while I suddenly heard, Faith, Hope, and Charity saying close to me. 'We alone are related, in this mixed society, and will have nothing to do with the Heathen world on either side of us.' Then Justice yawned so loud that it could be heard all over the Court and sighed saying: 'How lonely I feel here in the corner near to these dreary virtues. What has Justice in common with self-righteousness? Now if I were only over there next to Strength, I could at least carefully watch to see, that it did not break more columns than were necessary as schoolboy proofs of his juvenile strength.' Hercules next wanted to enter into conversation with Sampson. 'Sir Brother,' said he with a rap of his club, 'it was better fun for us when we were chasing lions, not to mention the honey.' But wasn't he snubbed, 'I am no brother of yours,' answered the proud Jewish hero, 'you are one of the Philistines whom I thrashed, and I will have nothing to do with you.' Next I heard Jupiter

sneeze. I looked upwards to see whether the Greek father of the Gods was about to enter into conversation with the Egyptian Serapis? But they both looked different ways and did not deign to exchange a friendly word. Once indeed Zeus cast a look down at Mars and Venus and then sighed: 'Gracious Heavens, how thin they have become.' Is it not true that you meant something of this sort when you said that Colins' figures could not endure one another? You have indeed a quick hearing, bellezza, and a poetical mind."

"Now," replied Lydia, curling up her nose, "do you suppose that when we sit at work all day we think of nothing but the cross-stitch. But it was ever clear to me, even as a child, that a totally different harmony and unison of mind was expressed in the two angels' heads on the Ruprechtsbau, than by any of the figures exhibited here by Master Colins, some of which he took from the cloister-school at Malines, the others from Italy, where you still remain semi-heathens."

"You are right, Signora, but in my home we are accustomed to this mixture."

"Your head is perhaps furnished in such a

manner, Sir Artist," said she teasingly, "that the characters of the Bible and the Greek Gods meet each other therein as they do on Master Colins' façade!" Then she blushed at her own boldness, but Felice's boundless veneration was too great a temptation to a little naughtiness on the part of this young Thing just fresh from school, who missed not a little her daily scrimmages with the aristocratic young ladies of the Stift.

"When you speak of a want of harmony," said the Artist, a little excited at Klytia's want of veneration for his learning as a man, "you allude above all to the insipid German texts in monkish verse, which the deceased plump Count Palatine stuck under the Gods and Heroes, in place of which I would willingly read a classic epigram in the latin language. But you are quite right, the entire façade is an emblem of the contention which takes place in our mortal life. The beauties of Greece and the virtues of Christianity strive for mastery in our hearts. And not only are the figures in contradiction, but the Antique and Gothic forms are at variance with one another. The harmony of construction, which composes true classic architecture is wanting. How discordantly do the Gothic

arms and shields contrast with the Antique lines of the portal. The highest beauty consists in the artistic blending of the red sandstone and the blue sky, and when the Kurfürst lately stated that he wished he could burn down the, to him, hated sculptured casket, I could not help involuntarily thinking, how beautifully the ruin would stand out, when the blue sky should be seen through the voided casements."

"Gracious powers," cried Lydia. "As long as we live up so high, do not try such an experiment; and now go on with your work; I do not want to hear any lecture which may end by your falling down and breaking your neck."

Pale and hurt Felix drew back. His hopes nevertheless stood higher than he thought; but Lydia had remarked, how the neighbours were craning their necks to look up at the scaffolding, on which Felix was carrying on his assault, and she heard the "red headed Frenz" say that Lydia's windows must have needed an extraordinary amount of repairing, as the Italian gentleman never seemed to leave them. "They will make a handsome couple," Herr Bachmann now asserted in no low tones, "the tall dark Italian, and the fair haired maiden. I

shall be rejoiced, Frau Barbara, when they make their first appearance in church together." This then was the cause of her dismissing Felice in so summary a manner.

The beauteous morning was succeeded by a close afternoon. Since that dream the images of the brothers came up before her so continually that she could hardly tell them apart. But the present moment maintained its right. The gloomy priest disappeared in the joyous artist, and from the moment that Lydia had accustomed herself to the thought, that the Magister could never be hers, and that he had only played a sinful part towards her, she sadly compelled herself to find once more her idol in the happy trusty friend. Thus there remained much that was true in her unfaithfulness. In reality she only cared for Felix for Paul's sake. The artist in the meanwhile stood outside on his scaffold in a pensive manner. The oppressive heat, precursor of a storm weighed him down, and Lydia's dismissal had deeply affected him. He made no effort to resume his jokes of the morning, and could not even hum an air. "Could I have offended him?" thought the kind-hearted child within, "he has become so silent;" as she looked upwards at the

streaky sky, a gust of wind blew the dust in her eyes, and whirled the loose leaves high up into the air. "May the storm not break forth before that he is safely down from his scaffold," thought she anxiously as a heavier gust burst forth. The windows rattled, the shutters blew to, slates fell from the roof, boards were carried off and crashed into the court beneath; slates, panes of glass, bricks, came tumbling from above, and noise and confusion were heard on all sides of the court. Lydia rushed to shut the window, and then saw Felice clinging convulsively to the shaking scaffold. "Come in here, in here," she cried in her fright to him. He shook his head sadly, and made a motion to show that he would slide down the poles so soon as the wind abated. A more violent gust caused the bricks to shower down from the roof and shook the whole scaffold. "Felix, Felix," cried the terrified maiden stretching out her arms towards him. A happy smile played over his features, and with one bound the active youth was at her side. As she closed the window, he had already folded her within his strong arms. "I have won thee by storm," he cried rejoicingly, but she was silent and loosed herself

from his embrace. "You called me in, now keep me," he said earnestly, "you wished to save my life, save it in reality." She gazed on him long and earnestly. It was, as if the image of some departed friend was before her, and she was endeavoring to find some similitude. Then blushing she sank her head. Thoroughly happy he shouted for joy, laid his arms around her neck, his lips sought hers. The storm outside, which now burst forth, did not disturb his happiness. The rain streamed down into the court below. What mattered it to him? At every sheet of lightning he kissed her quivering eyelids, at every clap of thunder he pressed his lips to hers. "I have wooed thee by thunder and lightening, may it strike me if ever I prove unfaithful to thee." Suddenly her father's voice was heard outside, as he himself had likewise been driven home by the storm. Lydia drew back terrified, but Felice seized fast hold of her hand and thus went with her to meet the physician. Astonished Erastus drew back for a moment, and then said smilingly, "Ah, is this so," and kissed Lydia's pure forehead. She remained silent and blushing laid her innocent head on her beloved father's breast. "You are welcome to me," said

Erastus turning to Felice, "provided only that you abjure papistry." The Maestro bounded like a shy-ing steed. "It cannot be your meaning, noble Sir," he said, "that I must confess a belief, which my heart does not admit."

"Such is not my meaning," answered the physician, "but when you stole my child's heart, you must have well known, that Erastus would never choose a papist for son-in-law. What I oppose here in Olevianus' church discipline, is the power of the priesthood, the subjugation of conscience, how could you therefore expect, that I should ever permit my child to confess to one of your priests?"

"That she shall never do, noble Sir. She shall live in her faith, as I in mine."

"Where could that be possible? Certainly not here in Heidelberg. You would never be accepted as citizen, and in your country my child would certainly be imprisoned by the Inquisition."

"In Austria it is however possible," replied Felix. "I shall return to Master Colins in Innsbruck. The noble minded Kaiser Max admits both con-

fessions, and marriages between members of the two religions are not uncommon there." Erastus shook his head thoughtfully. Lydia's resigned calm also led him to ask himself, whether his child was not in reality acting in obedience to his wishes, and whether this young heart was really ripe enough for binding vows? He at last said, "I will seek more information as to how matters stand in Irmsbruck, do you likewise seek to know more about our faith. Lydia is still young. Let us put off the final word to a later day." Thus it remained. Master Felice would have willingly appeared in the character of an accepted lover, but as Erastus permitted him to visit Lydia as before, he declared himself satisfied for the time. When his work was over, he hastened to Klytia, and sat joking and lounging at her side. She was ever gentle and kind to him, but never cast her thoughtful quiet manner aside. She had assumed a timid reserve, which forbade any too demonstrative love. The excitement of decision once over the poor child felt herself to be inwardly divided against herself. She loved, but whether Paolo, or Felice she knew not; she was engaged, but the father forbade any public acknowledgment. Good and gentle of disposition

she suffered Felice to love her, without however granting him the slightest rights. Usually, when the artist visited her of an evening, her Dante lay ready, and by compelling him to read aloud, she held his passion in due bounds. But even the majesty of Dante's poetry became melodious song when read by the loving artist, and we may well imagine what verses he most looked forward to, in the hope, that the narrative of Francesca da Rimini would serve to thaw her icy reserve. But Lydia had wisely looked over the book beforehand, and was prepared against this would-be adopted means. The fifth canto containing the story of Rimini's unhappy lovers, lay open in its usual place, on the evening so much longed for by Felice, but Lydia received him with maidenlike sedateness. He had that day carefully curled his locks and held in his hand one of those dark-red roses which had first told his love, but he had not the courage to offer it to her, for she had moved her seat further from him than on any previous evening. It is true he read beautifully that day, or nearly as beautifully as "he," but as he was just about to begin the story of the lovers, who also read together, "how Lancelot wrapped in pure love," to "often did their

eyes meet and lovingly rose the color in their cheeks, and often did he kiss the smile of his beloved," she closed in maidenly scorn the book and her "we won't read any more to-night" dispelled in an exasperating manner Felice's hopes. Out of humor and disappointed he sat near her turning over the leaves of Lydia's prayer book. He found pressed therein a blue flower. It stabbed him to the heart, for the maiden had thrown his rose out of the window the moment it withered. Hastily did he close the book which only hid Paolo's flowers. The following evening Lydia begged him to read to her one of the sonnets of his beloved Michel Angelo. He noticed with joy whilst he read, how tenderly her blue eyes were fixed on him, but when he left off, to return her gaze, she murmured as if in a dream: "He is paler." Thus it became clear to him that she only sought Paolo's features in his own. She grew more and more sad and still. It appeared to him as if the blooming color on her cheek paled. "She has deceived herself," he sighed. "When the sunflower is forcibly prevented from gazing at the sun, it withers away. Paolo will ever be her Apollo. Poor child!" But a colder feeling entered into his

own heart, he could never rejoice in a love, which he owed to another, and which through him was bestowed upon his brother. "She wished to marry Paolo *in effigie*," he murmured angrily to himself, "and she does not even find the image resembling."

CHAPTER III.

AFTER the completion of the mysterious *exercitia*, Paul returned to Heidelberg from Speyer. His brother found him serious, pale, but calmer than before. Instead of the lurid passionate glare of the eye which had so often terrified Felice, he found him at times struggling with his tears. He did not resume his office in the Stift. The parson of a neighboring village, who was looked upon as a Lutheran at heart, filled that post. From the mouth of the Abbess, who had inquired into Paul's unexpected disappearance and Lydia's sudden illness with more suspicion than any one else and who thereby had come nearer to the truth, did he hear of the misfortune which had befallen his beloved pupil. During her narrative the old lady had fixed a curiously cold and searching look on him, and her fingers played with the rosary, no longer at her side. Luckily for him he did not at first connect this

event with the appointment made by him on the Kreuzweg, so that he was enabled to ask in an unconstrained manner for exact details. "I heard the news on the same day that I received your letter from Speyer," said the Countess in a cold tone, and again she looked at him with a piercing gaze. Abashed he rose up and hastily took his leave. It was evident that this woman saw through him, and only had to open her mouth to ruin him.

Added to his crime towards the ministers was now another towards Erastus, whose child perhaps crippled for life, had had her peace of mind destroyed in any case through him. From that hour he no longer ventured to visit the Stift. Hastily did he reject his brother's offer to share his dwelling in the Schloss. He preferred taking an apartment by himself in the marketplace. There he often worked till late in the night, as might be seen from the light in his window; by day he would stand for hours at the window and survey with saddened look the throng in the market, or follow with his eye the single individuals who might at a later hour cross the emptied square, as if envying each man his freedom. After some time had elapsed, when once again a more sympathetic relation had sprung up between the

brothers, Felix made known to him his engagement to Klytia. Paul turned pale, and for the first time the tigerish glare in his eyes intimidated his brother; then silently did he turn to the window. "I know she loves thee," added Felice, "but thou art not freed from thy oaths. Renounce thy order and I will at once retire. But Klytia is too good to be toyed with, she must not be torn up as a flower on the road-side, for a passing pleasure and then cast away."

"I have raised no objections," said Paul in a husky voice.

"Then dost thou renounce her?" asked Felix earnestly.

"It is well as it is. I wished to free myself when in Speyer but did not succeed. We are bound by more chains than you imagine. I must have become Protestant in earnest, so as to shake them off; that I cannot do. I must have given up all hopes of returning to Italy, and that also I cannot do. I cannot be free, but I have sworn, never to let myself be made a tool of again."

Felix pressed his hand. "Thou shouldst quit thy dubious position here altogether."

"That I will do. But I can only do so by order of my superiors. I am waiting for them, God only knows with how much sorrow."

Thus the brothers parted. Grief concerning Klytia had disclosed the true feelings of Paul's heart more than ever before, and Felice now knew what fierce contentions had taken place, in spite of this cold pale face.

The Magister had returned to Heidelberg with a feeling of deep shame. He had been received in a most friendly manner, but if asked how he had spent his holidays, he turned pale and answered evasively. The friendliness with which the common people greeted him, oppressed him. "They have so good an opinion of thee," he said to himself, "which thou dost not deserve." Since he had admitted his unworthiness to himself by his foolish flight, and affirmed this acknowledgment in the confessional and in a written declaration, he knew himself as if portrayed. His inward impurity if but only of a negative kind had become external and practical, and it seemed to him as if thereby the intended sin had been in reality committed. Involuntarily he sought to discover in the face of each acquaintance whether his flight was known in

Heidelberg, and yet he dared not make the slightest allusion to it, lest he should himself betray it. His secret ever on his lips, he feared that he himself might reveal it. Ever listening to hear it, terrified by any accidental word, guileless did he wish to live among the guileless, and nevertheless he ever thought of his sin, and the most insignificant allusion drove the blood to his heart. Thus did he sojourn among men, humble, fearful, modest, nevertheless full of suspicion and mistrust, with that shy manner peculiar to nocturnal animals by day, an image of an evil conscience worthy of all pity. Besides this an especial punishment caused by an accidental circumstance, of which no one had the slightest conception, was reserved for him. There are new melodies which spread like epidemics, for a while rule the market, till finally they are as totally forgotten as their predecessors. The newest melody for the time in Heidelberg was the Gavotte of that jovial Huguenot Henry IV. of France: "Oh! thou beauteous Gabrielle," heard played by Paul on the day when he took flight to Speyer. The baker's boy who left the warm bread of a morning at each house, whistled in shrill notes, "Oh! thou beauteous Gabrielle." The cobbler's boy who carried the

boots and shoes repaired for his master's customers took good care that it should not be forgotten. From out of the open windows was heard the "beauteous Gabrielle" in whose honor the maidens of the Palatinate let their passionate thoughts pour forth. The "beauteous Gabrielle" was played of an evening by the bands in the public gardens, and drunken students sought their beds late after midnight humming the tune of the "beauteous Gabrielle." If this eternal repetition became wearisome to nervous people, it connected itself ever in Paul's mind with his downfall. If his thoughts had once freed themselves from the comfortless recollection of his imprisonment, of his guilt, of the overwhelming consciousness of having been a perjured priest, immediately the hated melody made itself heard, and he saw himself in the ignoble position of a priest compelled by his evil conscience to take flight, and the words of his unknown monitor sounded in his ears: "Fly for all is betrayed." He had once met on the street the red-headed boy to whom he had confided his message to Lydia. The boy had saluted him in an evidently derisive manner, and Paolo blushed to the roots of his hair. He feared to find in every peasant wench the bearer

of his warning and meet a second person who knew of his sin. Every mocking gesture, made by some uncouth pupil of the college during the hours of instruction quite decomposed him. He could not free himself from the feeling that he was being watched, being spoken of. He continually fancied himself abused and as he looked aside pale and agitated, when people wished to greet him, he was in reality treated with less friendly feeling than before, in the which he only saw a confirmation of his opinion, that a universal contempt was felt for him. By day and night he thought over whether it could be proved that he had betrayed the clergymen, whether he in case of an inquiry could deny the appointment made with Lydia. All his thoughts were concentrated on this point; he was hurrying towards depression and monomania. A coarser nature would have easily set aside trespasses which as a fact had never been committed; his melancholy disposition supplemented the evil. In his own eyes he was not like other young men who had stumbled, but a priest who had broken his oaths, and violated his consecration. For God punishes heavily the sins of men, the more their moral conceptions are developed. None can enjoy at one and the same time

the pure pleasure of ideality and the debasing joys of sensuality; for the proverb "*quod licet bovi non licet Jovi*" avails also when inverted. "Thou hast wished to purchase pleasure outside the limits of the law, and purchased thereby sorrow," said he to himself. "Thy just punishment has been meted to thee and only in so far as thou deservest it." And yet it seemed to him as if in early days much injustice had been done to him.

Accompanying this feeling was his grief for his lost love. Since Klytia had become another's, he felt for the first time, that his sentiments towards the sweet fair child had in reality been more than a sensuous dream of his passions. He might have been so happy, wherefore had he repelled this happiness? His love became serious, when however it was too late.

Weighed down by all this mental pressure he soon became quite another man to the public. The jesuitical tirades, by which he had formerly excited the wonderment of the young came no more from his lips. Since a genuine feeling had found admission into his heart, the pious phrases fell away from him as withered leaves. The living seed of

life, budding in him, cast out all that was false, fictitious or mendacious. He prayed much for himself, in the pulpit the words seemed to choke him. Even when following the coffins of those whom he accompanied to their last resting place, he felt himself void, inwardly dried up and wretched. It was no reality to him, that the sorrows of those left behind and for whom he prayed filled his heart. They might go and beg for aught he cared. It was no verity to him that the fate of the deceased in another world troubled him, he might go down to Hell or to Heaven, as it might please God. Sorrow for sin is egotistical and destroys all feeling of pity for the grief of others. One single wish filled his breast as he walked behind the hearse in his black gown, to be himself within that narrow coffin about to be imbedded in the cold still earth, above which bloomed the trees and flowers, the birds sang, and clouds by day passed over so lovingly, on which at night the moon shone so quietly and peacefully. All the spiritual commonplaces, with which he had formerly drawn forth the tears of those attending a christian's funeral, were now wiped away from his memory. Since that a veritable feeling now ruled him, sorrow for his lost

happiness, he experienced no longer those fictitious emotions, those false sensations. The veneration of others, for him a sinner, weighed him down to the ground. Every salutation due to his position, told him that he was a liar, and he felt ashamed of an office, from which his heart was so far distant.

As he was once again preparing himself to hold divine service, this feeling over-mastered him. "And wherefore dost thou not break loose from these bonds?" he asked himself. "Who has told thee, that this can be thine only vocation? Why wilt thou not prove which is stronger, a fate, which years ago seized upon a mere boy, or the riper will of a man?" For the first time he determined to act without consulting Pigavetta, and to resign his office without reference to his superiors. Though in so doing he did not free himself, yet it was one lie the less.

"Magister Laurenzano requests to be relieved from his spiritual functions," said at a sitting of the Church council held in the Auditorium of the former monastery of the bare-footed monks, the President Zuleger, a young Bohemian. "This is to be regretted on account of his oratorical talent, but as spiritual duties are not obligatory with his pro-

fessorial chair at the College, the request must be granted." The others agreed. "*Conclusum*," said the President to the Secretary, "the request is granted, with the hope nevertheless, that Magister Laurenzano will of his own accord from time to time preach the Gospel to the parishioners. *Fiat decretum*, but let it be written out in a friendly manner," added the President. The Secretary also did his best. But we, who know Magister Laurenzano's mental disposition, can hardly condemn him, for not giving way to the wishes of the honorable Collegium. Whilst Paolo thus apparently separated himself from the work of God, divine Grace had begun a work in his heart, which through repentance and sorrow refined him into a new man. The Magister did not speak with his spiritual tyrants about his fresh plans. He waited to see, what orders would be given to him. But Pigavetta appeared not to notice Paul's disappearance from the pulpit, in fact he acted as if Paul did not exist.

CHAPTER IV.

THE sitting of the Imperial Diet being at an end the court of the Kurfürst returned amidst the thunder of cannon fired from the Trutzkaiser to the Castle at Heidelberg, which during the meeting had been only opened for the accommodation of noble guests. The remaining groups of those returning home passed at the same time through the town; they were Polish, Transylvanian and Hungarian Magnates, who had ordered servants and horses to be sent from their homes to meet them in Heidelberg. A contagious disease broke out in the hostelry where the servants had slept, laying all the inhabitants of the house on the sick bed. Erastus was called in, examined the patients, who besides having a violent fever, had their faces, breasts and arm-pits covered with blue, violet and evil looking pustules. The swarthy complexion of the physician turned ashy-pale when he noticed these symptoms,

but without saying a word he ordered a sponge dipped in vinegar to be brought, which he fastened to his mouth. He caused his assistants to do likewise, and carry the sick to the Gutleuthaus, a hospital lying outside Heidelberg, which in former days had been founded for the use of the returning Crusaders affected with leprosy. The inns, in which the filthy guests had tarried were closed, the rooms disinfected with alkalines, the beds were burnt, and the doors nailed up. No one was to be permitted to enter the infected rooms for six weeks, with the exception of the medical assistants, who were from time to time to renew the means employed for purification. The population of the afflicted district was severely visited. The matter was hushed up so as not to injure trade, but every one knew that it was the plague, and the unclean guests who had introduced it were shunned. The eight patients lay together in the Gutleuthaus at Schlierbach, six died and but two recovered. These two were inhabitants of the neighbouring villages Schönau and Petersthal. Thoroughly fumigated and provided with entirely new clothing they were permitted to return to their homes. They found it to be to their own advantage not to speak about

the malady from which they had recovered, as otherwise no one would have taken them in. But one of them had placed his infected worthless clothing in a bundle which he brought back with him to his home. The other had exchanged the new boots of one of the dead for the inferior pair given him by the authorities of the hospital. Eight days after their return the pest broke out in these two villages with unheard of violence. The mother of the Schönau patient was the first to take the sickness and die, followed by the sister who had watched over her, the clergyman who had administered the sacraments, the women who had dressed out the corpse and those who had attended the burial. The guilty wretch who had caused all this evil, naturally kept silent. He quickly packed up his bundle and left for Schwaben. The same thing occurred in Petersthal. Inhabitants of these villages went from house to house in Heidelberg, offering fruit, vegetables, pine wood, cones, and straw-mats for sale. The physicians reported fresh cases of the plague in all parts of the town. A general fear seized the population. One morning it became known that the court had left for Mosbach. Great was the discouragement of the citizens at

this ruthless step, for which the young wife of the Kurfürst was blamed. Whoever could, followed the example thus set. Erastus and his medical colleagues urged the magistrate to stricter measures. All communication with the infested villages was forbidden, the University and schools were closed. The hospital was set aside especially for plague stricken patients, and everyone infected with this terrible sickness was carried thither. A violent thunderstorm which dispelled the evil vapors, aided by a high tide which cleared out the sewers enabled them to obtain the mastery. The Court returned to the Castle and Heidelberg resumed its usual aspect. But even after the disappearance of the epidemic, a victim died here and there of the disease from which they had imagined themselves now free. The cause lay in the continuation of the plague in the neighbouring villages, which in the anxiety to save the town had been neglected. Heart-rending were the accounts heard, but the exertions of the officials were limited to the provision of food, the strictest quarantine being maintained. He who wished to leave to render assistance, could only do so by promising not to return. Erastus finally managed to carry an order

through, that the Magistrate and certain physicians should visit the various localities, bringing with them especially medicines, clean clothing, and linen. As the Magistrate fell ill on the day appointed Erastus placed himself at the head of the Commission to see what might be done to abate the evil. Ten of the hospital laborers accompanied them with spades and axes in a second cart. A third cart was loaded with wine, food, lime, and other disinfectants. The physicians found the nearest village still as if all were dead. All the roads leading from the mountains were barricaded and the peasantry armed with halberds and weapons mounted guard to prevent the entry of the inhabitants of the valleys. The Commissioners were only permitted to pass their carts through with the greatest difficulty, and in spite of the mandate given by the Kurfürst, the peasants declared they would not suffer one of the gentlemen to return that way, as the plague did not seem to trouble itself about princely mandates. They continued on their way through this still valley of death. Here and there a stray beast browsed on the green pastures. The houses of the peasantry above seemed to be abandoned. The Commissioners en-

tered one. A hen seeking for grain in the empty court was the only living being. The doors were broken in, the shutters burst out. Objects which plunderers had not been able to carry off lay scattered on the floor in wild confusion. Further on they found a dead body lying at a little distance from one of the roads to the fields. Where death had overtaken him, there lay the miserable being. The physicians gazed in horror at the wild distorted features of the corpse. "Death caused by the bite of a poisonous viper, or a rabid blood-hound appears in the form of an angel of peace as compared with that effected by the plague," said Erastus. In the next farm they saw a peasant sitting before his door on a bundle of straw. His face was flaming from the inner heat, the eyes gleamed feverishly, he shaded them continually with his hands to avoid the light. "Why do you sit here, instead of being in bed?" asked Erastus.

"I have no one who will bring me water."

"Where are your laborers?"

"Gone."

"Your wife?"

"Dead."

"Have you no one to help you?"

"All are dead."

Erastus fastened the sponge dipped in vinegar once more to his mouth, and entered the dwelling with his colleagues who took the like precautions. The windows were still fastened up, as there was nothing the patient hated so much as light. The commissioners hastily threw them open, so as to dispel by a draught of fresh air the horrible odors. The sunlight disclosed a neatly ordered clean room. The evening meal still stood on the table, a proof, of how quickly the horrible pestilence had seized the various members of the family at the same moment. A child's catechism and slate lay near the window ready for the morning school. A wild confusion was however disclosed in the adjoining rooms. The floors were strewn with rags, bandages, and straw, which proved how terrible the ravages of the plague had been. Two dead children lay in the same bed convulsively grasping each other. On another bed was seen the body of a woman, to which still clung a child, whose waxy little hand hung stiff outside the bed. Erastus himself set to work and with the aid of his assistants carried the bodies outside. The neighboring houses presented the same appearance. The more distant farmyards had all

been plundered. The healthy occupants had taken to flight, the plague-stricken had gathered together in the villages, where the houses were nearer at hand, and where they might possibly render each other a little help. All round were heard sighs, shouts of delirium, and the death-rattle. Convalescents and those who were not so heavily afflicted by the infection moved about weakly and stupefied with fever rendering only the most necessary assistance. They brought the bread which had been deposited at a certain place outside the boundary line, into the village, milked the cows, kept up the fires, and buried the dead when capable of doing so.

"Where is the Mayor?" asked Erastus.

"Dead," answered a miserable looking knot of women, around whose necks hung some wretched infants.

"The clergyman?"

"His wife fell ill, he therefore hurried away with his family."

"The schoolmaster?"

"He went off with the clergyman."

"Who looks after you then?"

"No one."

Under these circumstances it was arranged that the physicians and workmen should remain there for a time, dig a grave for the dead, disinfect the houses, and give out medicines and clothes. Erastus however and others would go on to Schönau to see what might be done there. A solitary path in the woods led over the brow of the hill to the village. The farms lying high above on the slopes of the wood had mostly escaped the infection, they were however strictly barricaded, and the inhabitants repelled with hard words any attempt at approach. The first houses in the village they came to, were tightly fastened up, though traces of violence were however not to be perceived. Then they entered the little town, which in course of time had been built around the old abbey. Everything was quiet, but a better order seemed to prevail. Windows were open to admit the fresh air, the sick lay in clean beds, and near them stood a pitcher of water. The rooms were tidy. Pale children went to and fro to help the sufferers. Erastus entered one of the houses, to make some inquiries of a woman who seemed to be on the way towards recovery. He praised the means taken and asked if they were satisfied with their physician.

"We have no physician, none will come to us."

"Who taught you then to air the houses, and apply wet cloths to the head?"

"The clergyman from Heidelberg."

"Who is he?"

The woman shrugged her shoulders and turned her face to the wall. He saw that she did not wish to be disturbed. Outside he met some young men filling buckets with water.

"For whom is the water?" asked Erastus.

"For the sick in the Church."

"Have you turned the Church into an hospital?"

"Yes."

"Who ordered it?"

"The Heidelberg clergyman."

"Where is the Mayor?"

"Gone."

"And the parson of Schönauf?"

"Dead."

"And the schoolmaster?"

"Gone."

"Who is it then keeps order?"

"The Heidelberg clergyman."

Erastus became interested in finding out the man, who by his own exertions had worked the miracle, of mustering together a strange parish, and so organizing it that nothing was left for his Commission to do. He entered the large roman church, whose wide spanned aisles had been transformed into well aired cool wards. A long row of patients lay near the walls on beds of straw covered with blankets. The hideous disease showed even here its true character; there were faces who bore the stamp of death, and others distorted grimly by their sufferings, delirious patients who raged, laughed insanely and raved, convalescents who lay stretched out weak and helpless on their beds, many of them wishing that the end of their sufferings might overtake them. But they were all thoroughly cared for, they lay protected from the painful light; in spite of the number of the sufferers the air was pure and continually renewed, without the patients suffering from the draughts. Women moved quietly and lightly hither and thither and provided for all their necessities. The skilled look of the physician took in with satisfaction the picture thus presented to him. He saw a priest kneeling in a dark corner of the Church near a dying man.

He heard prayers spoken in low tones, he saw the Catholic sign of the cross made by the priest over the dying man, and could not help shaking his head. "Who can that be?" he thought.

The priest rose, a tall thin figure. "Magister Laurenzano!" cried Erastus in his astonishment. Paul had also recognized Erastus. He approached him in a constrained manner. Then he said "Heaven has sent you to us, Sir Counsellor! It was indeed time that the government should remember us. Please to come with me to the Cloister. Twice did I wish to send in letters and messages, for what we needed, but neither letters nor messengers were allowed in through cowardly fear of infection. Come, come, at last help has reached us."

The look of this young man, who, utterly regardless of his own safety, waited on the sick without using any antidotes against infection, so shamed Erastus, that he secretly placed his vinegared sponge in his pocket, and accompanied Laurenzano to the abandoned monastery which had likewise been turned into an hospital. The young Priest set before Erastus in the high vaulted Refectory a beaker of wine, and pointing to long

rows of bottles and glasses said, "Here are my head-quarters." Erastus joined to his expression of admiration for Paolo's self-denying energy, a few strong remarks on the baseness of the officials who had run away, on the heartlessness of members of families who had left, and on the sordidness of the population.

"Do not say that, Sir," answered Paul, and a gentle tone of sympathy lay in his fine, deep voice. "I have in these days of struggle learnt, on the contrary, that more love exists among us, than I formerly used to think. I have seen proofs of self-sacrifice, which made my heart melt, not only from the mother to her children, or the daughter to her father. Go over there and see these delicate pale women, still for the most part suffering from the fever, who nevertheless indefatigably listen for every impatient groan uttered by the sick."

Erastus interrupted him with an account of how he had found matters in Petersthal.

"Thus was it here also," replied Paolo, "but who is to blame for this state of things? The Prince's government, no one else. The people only needed guiding. Out of shere despair they raged against one another. But it was sufficient, in order to re-

store confidence among them, merely to tell them that they could help each other, and the apparent coarseness and selfishness gave way to the uttermost self-sacrifice and generosity. Since everything has been organized, since each one knows that he will be found a fitting position for his energies and that he is necessary and indispensable, the people have developed a conscientiousness and faithfulness, which have quite astonished me. I have learnt to think better of your people, since I have led them against this most terrible enemy, than before, when I only saw occasionally the youth of Schönauf lounging on Sundays along the country roads."

"But how did you manage to bring about this miracle?" asked Erastus.

Paul smiled but did not answer this question. "Unfortunately we are in want of many necessities," said he. "Our vinegar is all consumed, all sweat-exciting herbs have been plucked from the mountains; we want lime to spread over the corpses and render the exhalations innocuous. We have now to make large fires, and these are costly and take up time."

"You can have all these things from me," re-

plied the physician. "Here is a list I have made of all the things which we bring you," and he pulled a paper out of his pocket. Paul cast a look at it, then stared fixedly with a look of sudden horror at the handwriting. "Did you write this yourself?" he asked in a tone, as if life and death were depending on the answer.

"Certainly, why do you ask." The priest's hand trembled. "Is that your handwriting?" repeated Paul looking anxiously towards Erastus. The physician did not understand what the priest meant. Convulsively did the young man compose himself. "I will mark out what we require," murmured he absently and left the room in evident confusion. Erastus looked after the strange young man with a shake of the head; he had expected that Paul would have rejoiced at receiving the articles, which he gave gratuitously to the patients.

Once outside the young priest pulled out the physician's list and examined it tremblingly. "There is no doubt," he muttered to himself, "the strokes are the same, as those which Pigavetta caused me to imitate, and Herr Adam, to whom his dictation was addressed, was none other than the heretical Parson Adam Neuser. But he threw the paper be-

fore my eyes into the street. Was it the same after all?" and with an expression of despair Paul sank down near the round window of the cloister and gazed gloomily out. "How the vipers of repentance, which for a time had curled up in some dark corner, bite once more? How again the old chain works its way into the flesh?" Should he warn Erastus. He sank into a melancholy train of thought, but could arrive at no determination. At last he shook it away from him. "Let us think of the misery of to-day. Should to-morrow another misfortune arise, it will be time enough. God's mercy does not let every seed of wickedness germinate, which we may have sown unthinkingly, and around me here there is sufficient misery, to requite by good to many, the evil which I have caused to many." Then he arose, so as to prepare himself in his chamber, for the service which he held for the sick every evening in the Church.

The physician wearied by his exertions of the day, remained for a while longer in the Refectory, and thought over his glass of wine about the young man, for whom he now felt so great an admiration. Shortly an old peasant woman, with white hair and a calm peaceful countenance appeared balancing a

basket full of herbs on her head. After setting down her basket, and wiping the perspiration from her brow, she began to pull out and sort the herbs.

"You must be very glad that the Heidelberg clergyman came among you?" said Erastus opening a conversation.

"Glad?" replied the old woman, "it was he who saved us."

"Yes indeed, when one compares Petersthal with your village, one must admire the man."

"If you had only witnessed, how he performed the miracle on the Kreuzwiese, you would speak in quite another way."

"What sort of miracle, mother?"

"You do not know it," said the old woman quickly. "Then you know nothing. You ought to have seen how the man addressed the people all day long but in vain. Those that were healthy packed up, and wanted to escape by footpaths that were not guarded. Wicked ruffians plundered the farm-yards and treated the defenceless owners with every cruelty, the sick lay abandoned in their rooms, in the streets, in the open fields. Then the strange clergyman threatened those who wished to leave

with all the punishments of heaven, should they abandon their parish to its fate.—Immediately the first miracle took place. The ring-leader of those about to depart, attempted to reach a footpath by climbing the stone-quarry behind the Sperlingshof, by which one can reach the road to Leiningen, without being stopped. As he reached the top, he stumbled, fell backwards into the quarry and broke his neck. You should then have seen the parson, pointing to the place and calling out to the people with flaming eyes. ‘I tell you, that each of you, that attempts this path, will end in this manner,’ and he began to call on God, to destroy all those, who wished to leave their brethren to destruction, and to help those who helped their brethren. By the quarry the holy cross still stands, which the Kurfürst ever wanted to break down as being an idolatrous image. The parish however opposed this, as it stood there long before the monastery, and is an old relic. Finally the Holy Virgin and the Disciple were broken off and taken away, but the blessed Saviour was allowed to remain on his Cross. The strange clergyman now turned towards Him, and you should only have heard him, how he addressed Him, it was enough to soften the

heart of a stone. The tears streamed down our cheeks. Then he called out as if entranced: 'Thou wilt it Lord! Give a sign that thou wilt it!' and he stretched both his hands towards the Saviour, as if he wished to embrace him, and called out exultingly. 'See, see, He wills it.' Then it seemed to us that we were dreaming. The stone image raised head and arms and bowed, thrice, four times. It seemed to us once, as if the whole of the sacred body inclined towards us. And then the clergyman turned to us and said: The Lord has said 'yes;' he who now doubts, or refuses, shall be burnt as an heretic, and I shall be the first to set fire to the pile.' Then you should have heard the silence that reigned among the people. I myself did not hear the 'yes' said, because I stood too far off, but there were many there who heard quite distinctly how the stone image opened its mouth and said 'yes' as does a bridegroom at the altar. The clergyman now numbered off the young men: 'Do you get down your spades and dig a large grave in the cemetery capable of holding at least thirty bodies. You,' he said to the older people, 'carry out the bodies and I will bless them so soon as the grave is ready.' Then turning to the young

girls, 'do you draw water' and to the older women 'do you purify the houses.' Then he singled out some of the men and women and said, 'you come with me and we shall turn the church into an hospital.' What could we do, his eyes flamed like two fires, his gestures were those of a Kurfürst, or Apostle, or something higher yet. I believe he would have slain with one single word, as St. Paul did Ananias, whosoever had opposed him. By sun-down the village was purified, the sick brought into the Church. Whosoever fell ill, was carried there, in case he could not be properly taken care of at home, and every day the Parson inspects the houses with the old people, to see that nothing is neglected."

"He is indeed a wonderful man," remarked Erastus.

"He is a Catholic," said the old woman in a low tone, "he administers the last unction to the dying."

"Are you sure of that," said Erastus incredulously.

The old woman nodded. "The old faith was however better, it could perform miracles." Erastus stood up. The admiration he had felt for

Laurenzano was turned by this one word into disgust. "With the old bogey of the Bare-footed monks and the new Jesuit tricks, he will endeavour to restore papistry here," said the excited physician. "So soon as the Magistrate has the courage to come out here, that stone object of idolatry must be pulled down. We will teach you to perform miracles and conversions." Enraged he stepped aside. He heard through the open windows of the Church the words of the evening service held by Laurenzano for the sick. No healthy person was allowed to enter, but the people stood in groups outside to catch through the open windows the words of the prayers offered. Erastus also approached. He heard how Paul explained the text of the Epistle of St. James to the sick. "Behold, we called them blessed which endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity and merciful." As a gentle soothing song sounded the melodious tone of the melancholy sermon from the church even to the place under the old lindens, fanned by the evening breeze: "Behold, we call them blessed which endured, endured even to the end. Our portion is grief and suffering but they

are at rest in the peace of God; we rack our brains to find out how to build up once more our fortunes, they have entered into the rest of the Saints, and are concealed in the eternal mansions; we must raise once more our arms in hard work, whilst they lie in a peaceful calm slumber. Thousands of irksome paths await our weary tread, while their feet are in sweet repose after their long pilgrimage." It seemed as if the patients in their couches were now more tranquil. The groans of agony ceased, the cries of impatience were hushed. "Behold, we call them blessed, which endured," re-echoed the preacher, "all of those who have gone forth through these portals to the silent chambers of God, have died in the Lord. But we also, who have been preserved for a fresh struggle, let us call ourselves blessed, in that we have suffered; for then only can we say with the Apostle: as we live, we live in the Lord. The destroying angel of God has come in among us like a prophet and he said: I have a word unto you, you children of men! He found you with your sorrows, cares, enmities, idle thoughts, your coarse enjoyments. Then came the dread angel of the Lord, and he asked you old people, what was the worth of that

for which you fret, grieve, quarrel, strive after, in the presence of death. He asked you young maidens, what was the value of your ornaments, finery, and beauty, if the next morning the angel of the plague touched you with its finger. He knocked the cup out of your hands, young men, and hushed your lewd songs. He placed the hand of the brother in that of the sister, he made peace between father and son, between neighbor and relation. Therefore let us call ourselves blessed, that we have gone through this time of tribulation. We take our life from God, as a gift bestowed a second time upon us, now let us make use of it as ordered by the Giver, as being at all time in His hand, which He can at all time demand back in case we misuse it. Let us all, who have endured, suffered, hoped, and feared in common, who have seen in common our own snatched away from our hearts and carried out to that place, from which none return, laid in that grave, which will only open at the sound of the last trump, let us be from henceforth as one family, and when the old spirit of strife, self-seeking, greed returns, then do I place you before those graves, and before this altar, which to-day hears your groans of agony, and

ask of you, how much all for which you may be striving may be worth, if the angel whom you have seen within the last days in all his dreadful majesty should return? Then will you live in the Lord, then shall we call you blessed, in that the appearance of the Holy Angel has made you wiser."

A touching prayer followed this discourse. Erastus was deeply moved. His wrath was gone. That which he had heard sounded so differently from the magister's former florid tirades rich in antitheses. Then used he to ape the preacher, this time had he preached. The listeners dispersed. As Erastus was slowly descending from the village, Paul caught him up, in order to accompany him on his way home. "You have petitioned the Council to free you from your spiritual functions," said Erastus, "I see however that you have not observed your own proposal."

"I was ill," said Paul, "sick at heart, poor and suffering, I felt that I had no longer any right to teach others, when I sent in that request," and a sad smile passed over his delicate, pale face. "When I however found that I could do some good by preaching, I naturally overlooked my unworthi-

ness. It would have been very wrong under such circumstances to think of one's self. I am thankful to-day to God, that he sent me this tribulation, which returned to my withered-up heart, the power to think of, and feel for the sorrow of others. These times have been a great blessing for me." As Erastus kept silent, Paul continued. "I have also become convinced once more, of the power of the Church offices as a guide to the ignorant. Only by prayer can these demoniacal powers be subdued. In spite of all reason I had been helpless without preaching and praying."

"You are forgetting the miracles," said Erastus sarcastically. Paul looked at him abashed. "Why do you attain your good intentions by deception and evident quackery? How about that miracle on the Kreuzweg?"

The young Priest smiled. "You have been in Bologna," he said, "and have seen the leaning tower, the Asinella:

How Carisanda's tower
Nods towards the traveller, whenever a cloud
Passes over it contrary to its incline,
Causing him rather to seek another road.

This same phenomenon happened to me, when addressing the people. The clouds were being driven by the wind across the blue heaven back of the cross, which since the rough spoliation of the other figures stands much out of the perpendicular, so that it appears in fact the more the sky is cast over, the more to nod or bend over. No one noticed this. But when I saw that the crowd was deeply affected by the sudden death of a wicked youth, who broke his neck at the time I prophesied, it shot through my brain, to weld the iron whilst it was hot. Thus I made the second miracle quickly succeed the first. You shake your head, but I had no other means to bring the people for their own good under my power. If ever a *pia fraus* was permissible it was then."

"You are a Romanist," said Erastus coldly.

"I am," answered the young Priest, who seemed to increase in stature. "I shall however leave the Palatinate, so soon as matters are so far in order here, that your officials and clergy can carry on the work." Saying this he stretched out his hand to Erastus as if for a last farewell. The physician hesitatingly gave him his lame right hand. "May

it be well with you," he said. But he thought to himself: "from to-day our paths are separate." As Erastus later on reaching a turn in the road looked back, he saw the young Priest coming out of a house with a child in his arms, leading another by the hand. The little ones had apparently lost their parents.

CHAPTER V.

ERASTUS found a more systematic order in Petersthal, on his return in the evening, but still much was wanting, as the four physicians with their dozen assistants had only accomplished the half of what the Priest had done single handed in the much larger district of Schönau. The laborers themselves had been obliged to undertake the burial of the dead and the cleaning of the streets, all the healthy men having fled. It was impossible to think of cleaning the houses, the women asserted that they were all too weak to help in any way. They could not even be induced to give up the beds and clothing they had used to be burnt, or to purify and air their houses. Out of humor, angry, and wearied of their fruitless toil, the physicians sat together round one of the carts, which they had fitted up as their night-quarters. The horses were fastened to the trees, whilst each man made ready with the

means at hand. Erastus still went about the neighboring houses, to at least aid the sick as far as possible, and only when darkness prevented any further visitation did the conscientious physician seek his own narrow cart. Wearied he stretched himself out and gazed upwards at the starry sky, whose pure beauty formed a singular contrast to the misery going on around him. Jupiter beamed in calm splendor, and to the South shone the ruddy Mars. "Can your conjunctions have anything to do with death, plague and pestilence?" thought the physician, who was generally known as an opponent of astrology. Then he also slumbered off, but in his restless sleep he heard the laborers stealing the provision and guzzling the wine set aside for the sick. Towards morning there was an alarm. Some scoundrels had furtively approached the provision cart and attempted to quietly draw it away. But two of the laborers, who contrary to Erastus' orders had laid down between some sacks, awoke and roared for help, at which the thieves disappeared in the darkness. At day-break the expedition arose with stiff limbs, heavy heads, and in a most dejected condition of mind. The fruitless negotiations with the people demoralised through sickness began

anew. As Erastus perceived that in this way he would never attain his object, he determined to copy the example which had been set him the day previous. He turned his back to the scolding women, and directed his steps towards the church, whose steeple ranged high above the houses and trees. Surrounded by a low broken down wall, the small white village church gleamed through the fruit trees amidst wooden crosses and sunken graves. The physician thought of turning this into an hospital, but the narrow space would only hold at the most thirty patients. He had to take hay and straw by force from the stalls, and with these the laborers prepared a clean litter along the walls of the church. Erastus and some of his assistants returned to the carts to fetch blankets and linen. On his return, he saw a column of smoke arising near the chapel and an alarm of fire was raised in the quiet village. A peasant enraged at the forcible abstraction of his hay, had set his whole provision on fire, and stole unmolested away. It was useless to think of extinguishing the flames. With a grim laugh the laborers sat on the walls of the church-yard and looked on at the little church burning down. "If these people will not help themselves in any way,"

said the physicians, "let us leave them. When the pestilence has raged itself out it will cease of itself." Erastus urged them to make one more house to house visitation. They shrugged their shoulders and left it to him. The well intentioned physician met only with senseless objections or coarse abuse on giving orders in the nearest house, that the infected objects should be burnt. He at length lost all patience, and declared he would hand over no provisions to those who refused to obey his directions. He then together with his laborers began clearing out the empty farm-yards, so that after this work had been completed, the healthy could occupy them instead of their infected dens in the village. Here and there large fires fed by the straw beds of the patients now flamed up, and the disgusting smell of burnt linen filled the entire valley. But Erastus' own people had had already enough of the affair. Nothing was done as quick as he ordered it, or as he had ordered it. The laborers took advantage of the evacuation of the sick-dens to pilfer, as predicted by the peasants, and the villagers stood in angry groups together consulting as to whether they could not resist by force the attacks of these strangers. Finally Erastus

was compelled to make the humiliating confession to himself, that without priestly intervention he could never attain his object among this debased population. Paul's miracle on the Kreuzweg appeared to him now in a much milder light. So he sat down on a stone and wrote a letter to the Magister. "Jurists and medical men abdicate, and pray for help from the theologians," he began his request to Paul, asking him whether he could not leave Schönau to itself for a short while, so as to place matters here on a better footing. One of the laborers was despatched to the monastery with this prayer to the miracle-monger, a request disagreeable enough to Erastus, who himself returned once more to his thankless duties. The mood of the peasants had now become belligerent. They stood around the carts in groups and declared that the Kurfürst had sent these provisions for their benefit, and that the Counsellor had no right to withhold them. Some of the men and youths, who had kept out of the way on the previous day, now mingled among the groups. They were presumably the same who had made the nightly attack on the cart containing the provisions. Erastus had to summon his men from their work to guard the wagons. The physicians themselves be-

gan to be weary of their work. "Let us give the provisions to this rebellious peasantry and leave them to their fate," they said. Whilst thus a violent discussion arose among the members of the Commission, an impudent youth sprang upon the provision cart and tore down the linen covering. Immediately the women surrounded the cart and seized casks and sacks with eager hands. Suddenly the trot of horses was heard at the entrance of the village. "The police magistrate with four mounted men," cried a laborer, "he knows what is necessary to do." The women crept off, in an instant the crowd dispersed and the young men disappeared behind the houses. Herr Hartmann Hartmanni, "the learned Magistrate," as he was wont to be called by the guests at the Hirsch, appeared on the spot and sprang from his horse. He was a handsome man, this magistrate, but his tall figure was broken down through dissipation. Only a few sparse black hairs covered the head of this man yet in the prime of life, and all the seven mortal sins had left their traces on his worn face. His eyes were crooked, and his legs no longer carried out the wishes of their owner. Although the ends of his moustache curled up grimly, the corners of the mouth were

weak and flabby. For so severe a man his bearing was rather affected, as he much liked to show off the learning, which he owed to the old school of humanity at Heidelberg. Herr Hartmann Hartmanni did not like work. Instead of fulfilling his office at the town-hall, he preferred making verses, and the reports of his examinations often read like poems. The Kurfürst wished to dismiss him, but the Amtmann of Heidelberg had rendered to Frederic III., at the death of Otto Heinrich, a signal service. He had enabled the poor Duke of Simmern to enter Heidelberg in sufficient time to possess himself of his legitimate inheritance, which the Duke Albert of Bavaria was already preparing to seize. Thus the Kurfürst felt himself bound down by personal obligations, and many a Prince has been compelled to adopt new reforms to render an official whom he does not wish to offend harmless. Herr Hartmann's bad management had rendered the idea of handing over police management to the Presbyters more acceptable to Frederic III., as the Church alone seemed to have an earnest desire to punish sin. Naturally the Magistrate himself was numbered among the friends of the Geneva Ban who would thus relieve him of a part

of his burdensome duties. Such was the man who now appeared on Paolo's battle-field of Schönau. Half rake, half pedant he presented at no time a pleasant appearance, but that day he was as wonderfully decked out as if he had copied Holbein's picture of the plague-doctor. In one hand he had a bottle of vinegar which he clapped to his nose so soon as the smell of burnt bedding reached his nostrils; in the other he held drawn his longest sword, as if to keep away every danger from his person. If he had to touch anything, he dropped the vinegar bottle into his pocket, and brought out a pair of tweezers, with which he held out the objects, although he appeared well protected by thick leather gloves. Doublet and hose were stuffed out with camomile and peppermint, and in case this did not suffice, around his breast and back hung hollow balls pierced with holes, from which sponges steeped in medicines, spread a stupefying odor. Deadly fear and silent rage at the disgusting duty imposed on him were expressed on his dark countenance. His first magisterial duty was to arrest the peasant who had caused the fire, and who for the time was bound to a tree. The soldiers brought about by blows and curses the execution of the pre-

cautionary measures, which the physician had been vainly endeavouring for the last twenty-four hours to induce the obstinate peasant-women to adopt. At midday the Magistrate held an inquiry as to how the plague had crept in. At first the women kept a sullen silence, till finally a young wench on whose features idiocy was plainly marked stepped forward and related like some cackling hen her confused tale. Every evening before the outburst of the pestilence, a dog with fiery eyes had run across the village snapping at the houses. Wherever he had stopped, the plague declared itself within seven days. The dog was in fact no one else but the herb-woman of the Kreuzgrund, in whose hut he always disappeared. The infection had left off at the Kreuzgrund, not a single person had died there. "So she is again to the front," said the Magistrate. "In the office there is already a series of papers about her misdeeds. Now is she ripe for the stake. Does not her appearance quite coincide with the story of the mad dog at Ephesus, which Apollonius of Tyana ordered to be stoned to death?" he said turning to the Counsellor. Erastus however returned to his cart, he would have nothing to do with the matter. The Magistrate mounted

accompanied by two men, to arrest Mother Sibylla. Near them ran the girl who had accused the witch to act as guide. "That she is a witch," she said panting, "one can know from her always having butter, and yet no one has ever seen her churning. She has charmed my Peter and he now keeps company with Sue, and my mother's pains are also owing to her. But there is her house, I won't go any further, else she will do me some harm." The old woman's hut lay in the woody green Seitenthal, whose stream turned the wheels of Werner's mill. It was a small house black with smoke and age having blind windows. The door was shut, one of the soldiers looked through the cracks: "All is empty, she escaped up the chimney the moment she heard us coming."

"Dismount, we must make an inventory," ordered the Magistrate. The men dismounted and a strong shove soon broke in the door of the empty hut. On entering the soldiers made the sign of the cross to guard themselves from the magic arts of the escaped witch. This was a catholic custom and it was well for them that none of the gentlemen forming the Church Council saw them otherwise they would have been dismissed from the service. The room was

empty. Only a large black cat sitting by the hearth, glared with ferocious green eyes at the uninvited guests. "Could that be the witch in person." The sergeant approached, "Jesus, Maria, Joseph," he yelled out as the cat made a spring forward and disappeared through the open door. Herr Hartmann Hartmanni maintained his composure, but nevertheless let his men precede him, so that they might fall victims to any magic curse, which the old woman might have left behind. He also took care not to touch anything. Whatever was to be confiscated, he let the soldiers take away. There was however not much. Above the empty hearth, hung a fox's skin, as well as other furs and hides, placed there by the witch to be dried out. A box with old iron seemed to Herr Hartmann to resemble the nails of a scaffold, and the rope hanging near might have been used for hanging. Brooms leaning against the chimney appeared to him worthy of suspicion. All kinds of flowers and herbs were laid out on boards or in wicker-baskets to be dried: elder, dandelions, camomile, lime-blossoms, and others, though it was not really necessary for the devil to have taught mother Sibylla their properties. The disappointed police-officers looked at each other,

was that really a witch's kitchen? The sergeant came a sudden exclamation of joy and pointed to a small trap-door carefully concealed by old clothes. Herr Hartmann pushed it open with his sword, and as it gave way ordered the officer to open it. "Here we have her household ware," said the Amtmann with a furious look. The men entered into the room. The bleached skull of a horse gazed at them with hollowed eyes from the opposite wall. On old pots and broken dishes lay dried wolves' eyes, birds' hearts, owls' feathers and claws. Snakes with black backs and white bellies were seen in tightly corked glass bottles, as well as horribly distended toads. Lizards with far cleverer eyes than those of the men looking at them returned their gaze from the glassy confines in which they were placed. On the window-sill were little bottles with salves, fern-seeds, vervain and all kinds of magic powders. That which however most served to convict the witch, was a basket which the wicked old woman had evidently placed hurriedly down after her last trip, before escaping, for in it lay carefully wrapped up in rags and small boxes, all kinds of snake skeletons, toads' bones, a child's skull, wolf's hair, a bottle with pigeon's blood,

and numerous bits of paper on which curious symbols were inscribed, together with a skillet with tinder and flint used to cook the witch's broth in the woods. Herr Hartmann Hartmanni did not appear quite satisfied. "A miserably low slut," he said contemptuously, "the whole find is not worth fifty thalers. Take up the basket, as it is, and the old pots with their contents. This Satan's bride has concealed her more valuable implements, otherwise I should have managed to scrape together a pretty considerable sum out of these confiscated pots and kettles. But Master Hammerling will soon open her mouth, and make her tell, where she has hidden her treasure, the moment we have caught her."

"She won't let herself be caught," said the sergeant, "she is now away with the plague, and God only knows what shape she will assume, and whether she won't appear to us to-night as a nightmare."

"The plague take it," said the Amtmann tremblingly.

"I think, Sir," continued the soldier, "it would be as well to leave her property untouched, one never knows how she may revenge herself. It once

came to pass, that the Magistrate at Mosbach, after he had confiscated the witch's rubbish, went quietly to bed thinking that his beloved wife was already there; she however turned out to be the witch, pulled his leg out of the socket and otherwise injured him, then she vanished up the chimney, and what he had taken from her, had the next morning disappeared, in spite of having been carefully deposited under lock and key. I vote that we leave it all, as it is."

The Magistrate turned pale. "We can perhaps affix a seal," he murmured. At this instant a long dark figure appeared at the doorway. "Good Heavens," ejaculated the sergeant.

"Holy Martin," stuttered out the Magistrate, utterly regardless of the protestant doctrines.

"Is not the Counsellor Erastus here?" inquired Magister Laurenzano in his musical voice.

"Oh, is it you, Magister," said the Magistrate quite relieved. "You will find the Counsellor in the village, but could you not tell us, where to find the old witch, who lives in this hole?"

"What is she guilty of now?" asked Paul.

The Amtmann answered pathetically. "Strong evidence is adduced, that it was she, who caused the pestilence." Seeing the Magister turn pale, Herr

Hartmann raised his arm in a tragic manner. The sight of the learned and renowned pulpit orator inspired him. "Not without reason," began he his declamation, "is this wicked old woman named Sibylla. She has gathered near the Linsenteich the herbs, whose juices, as Plinius tells us, infuse corruption through all the channels of the body. By the white stone, where thorn and thistle thickly growing prevent an access, by the marshy alder stream, by all solitary moors, among the reedy thickets of the Kimmelsbach, in short everywhere, where the tread of man is seldom heard, has she been seen crouching, ensnaring toads and conversing with will-o-the wisps. Among the ruins of the Heiligenberg, where vipers wreath, and in yonder silent woods, where the mountain-cock was her solitary companion, has she been seen, as she divided the invisible regions of the air with hazel-twigs, brought down hail, and murmured invocations whilst crouching in the dust. She has poisoned the source of this brook, so that it brought the plague into the town, and transformed in the similitude of a dog has dropped the poisonous foam in the dark evening hour, on the thresholds of those houses, in which according to evidence the plague first broke out.

See here the implements of Satan," and he rapped upon the confiscated wares of the witch, "behold the black and white wand of Circe," said he, taking up a half-peeled hazel-stick from the corner and handing it to the Magister. A lurid fire gleamed in the widely distended eyes of the young Priest, excited at the account of these horrors. "Behold," continued the Magistrate carried away by his own discourse, "the hellish distillations, which she obtained drop by drop from the roots and stalks of plants, see, how she bottled the night-dew and poison of the fulsome toad, to sprinkle over innocent children, here in this kettle did she boil the poisonous vapours, which rising upwards to the clouds came down again as the seeds of pestilence, and behold moreover how this beauteous green wooded valley is already withered by the breath of the witch." Paul Laurenzano turned pale with excitement, his breath came and went quickly and audibly. The old fire of fanaticism gleamed in his dark eye. "I think I know who has concealed her," he said with tremulous voice. "Come, I will guide you."

The Amtmann strode reverentially at the side of the young clergyman. The soldiers followed at a

short interval leading the Magistrate's horse. Having proceeded for a brief space, the Magister left the road, and followed the course of a stream towards a mill. "Even in Schönau," he now said, "the report has spread, that the old witch brought in the plague, and as she was not safe in her house, you will find her concealed by the old Dissenter, Miller Werner." Behind the green orchard, overshadowed by poplars and elders, lay the mill sought for by the troop of police, an emblem of peace. The front window-shutters were closed, but the clapping wheels untiringly spoke by day and night the praise of the man, who even during these terrible times had not ceased working, but made bread for the starving inhabitants out of the newly gathered in harvest. The inhabitants of the mill had not heard the arrival of the soldiers owing to the noise of the wheels, but the Magistrate rapped loudly with the pommel of his sword on the closed shutters.

"Don't break in my windows, Peace-breaker," called out the voice of old Werner, "is that the way you ask for bread?" The shutter flew open and the weather-beaten face of the gray headed miller appeared. Surprised, yet without fear, he surveyed the group before his house, whilst the

red head of his boy, sprinkled over with flour, like the stalk of a red lily, cropped up behind him curious to hear what all this was about? But before the Baptist could express any astonishment the Magistrate began: "You are sheltering the old witch. Give her up else you will find yourself in the square tower, which you well know."

"Of what is she accused?" asked the old Miller calmly.

"Of spreading the plague," answered Herr Hartmann Hartmanni with due solemnity.

"And you, the Prince's Magistrate believe, that an old woman can have caused all the misery which the united officials of the Palatinate could not prevent? In that case, sir, do not lay your hand on her, lest she injure you through incantations."

"You admit then, that she is here?" asked the Magistrate.

The Baptist made a sign behind his back, and his red-headed boy disappeared through a door leading from within. Instead of answering the question, he then said,

"It is curious, for weeks we have been waiting for the officials to aid in stemming the pestilence.

My provisions are devoured, my faithful Martha is worn to a shadow through running, watching and attending others, government however let us rot and perish. But now, now that the plague is almost gone, riders and carts come to take off an old woman who is accused of being the cause of all the trouble." Herr Hartmann Hartmanni was rather taken aback at this unexpected onslaught, but a tremendous noise at the back of the house prevented him from making any answer. A horrible crowing, squeaking, and grunting was heard to proceed from a distant hay-rick. The horse of the sergeant leapt wildly neighing with emptied saddle over the garden hedge, whilst its gigantic master lay miserably grovelling in the dust. The other police officer cursed and swore, whilst endeavoring to hold on to the bridle of the dismounted magistrate's shying steed without letting his own bolt. Paul sprang forwards to discover the cause of the confusion. An old woman ran in his way thinking to reach the mountains unobserved. He laid tight hold of her and immediately the sergeant who had been thrown off picked himself up and seized the old woman by the arm. "Devils' witch," he said, "we will serve thee out for this." At the

same moment loud spans and mournful wails were heard from behind the house. "He who does not hear, must feel, foolish boy," roared the angry voice of the Miller. "How often have I told you not to play the devil. Now thou alone hast made the matter look bad." The two groups met together at the door, the angry Miller holding his howling son by the ear, the Parson and the sergeant hauling along the old woman, who let her feet drag over the ground, uttering the most bestial cries. "Did I not sell you the snakes," she said every now and then to the Parson, "let me go. You also use snakes for your enchantments." At this disgusting sight the Miller let his boy loose. "Shame on you," he cried, "to thus ill-use an old woman, you especially, a Priest!"

"Witch and heretic house together, that has ever been an old custom," replied the Magister angrily, whilst the sergeant and his officer bound the old woman and then threw her on the ground.

"You have given shelter to the witch," now said the Magistrate, "we heard in your yard with our own ears the neighing of the devilish host, who with horns, tails, and claws galloped close past the sergeant as he lay on the ground . . ."

"Dost thou see, George, what thou hast brought about," interposed the Miller, seizing his boy once more by the arm and shaking him. "He it was who imitated the hellish voices, to laugh over your fright, other devils are not to be found in my house. You will make yourselves ridiculous, if it is known, that you let yourselves be taken in by a child."

Solemnly Herr Hartmann Hartmanni turned round to the red-headed George, who stood sheepishly near the fence not understanding the extent of the danger to his person. "Good, then he goes also with us to Heidelberg, and if he be not found guilty of more devilish arts, he will nevertheless get his *quantum satis* of birching for ridiculing the district magistrate."

"You will certainly never lock up a mere child in the witch's tower for a boyish trick for which he has been already punished?" said the Miller. "What will become of a child in this terrible prison, he will be frightened to death."

"You will keep him company," now broke in the Magister. "Herr Hermanni, I accuse this Baptist and heretic of intriguing for his sect contrary to the prince's mandates. He has lately

availed himself of the terror caused by the plague, and also re-baptised certain families living in Schönau. Besides this you are witness, that he is in communication with the witch who is to be found on all cross-roads."

The Miller drew himself to his full height. "And thou priest of Baal, darest thou speak of cross-roads. Who is it makes appointments with innocent girls after sun-down on the cross-roads, yes, and the worst in repute of the whole district, where evil spirits, or rather evil passions abound." And once more the Miller pushed his boy to the front and called out: "Look on that boy, he it is to whom thou didst entrust thy filthy message." Pale as death Paul made a step backwards. Had when in decent company the whole of his clothes suddenly fallen off his body, he would have scarcely felt such a shock, as he did at his moral nakedness being thus exposed. A painful silence now reigned, all the more annihilating for the young Priest, as the audience had lately been increased, attracted by the noise the Heidelberg physicians together with the laborers and numerous peasant women had hastened up. All watched Paul's lips intently, to hear how he would answer

such a serious charge. But he remained silent. It seemed to him as if he had become transparent, and every one pried into his filthy secrets with mocking eyes.

Then the witch on the ground squeaked out. "He it was who enticed Herr Erastus' fair haired daughter of a dark night to the Holteimann."

"What sayest thou of my daughter?" cried out Erastus, approaching the old woman in a rage.

"Well, the Counsellor must best know where it was that his daughter broke her little foot. The Parson wanted to play at marriage with her on the cross-road, where the Evil One meets his mistress every night. But others came before the gentleman, and the bride sprang into the Heidenloch, and that was too humid a bride-chamber for Sir Parson."

"You keep silent, old Dragon," whispered the old Miller, giving her a kick with his foot, but the bound witch only called out her wondrous tale doubly loud to the people around. Erastus' features became distorted, he laughed through very excitement. He resembled at that moment in his maddening sorrow the Devil himself, as his enemies averred; his hair bristled up, his face

became black, whilst the white of his eye gleamed horribly from out of his darkened countenance. The cowardly Magistrate drew back. Among what sort of people had he fallen! He had long known Erastus to be a heretic; but now his daughter was a witch; he himself perhaps a sorcerer; did not the terrible man look exactly like one at that moment. And the foreign Parson moreover, whom Herr Hartmanni had never trusted, and who, as he the Magistrate of the district had just been informed, also bought witches' wares, held converse with the Evil one on the cross-road, and brought young maidens to his nightly revels. Not to mention the Baptist, his devilish boy, and the bound witch herself, who fixed him with an evil glare. Everyone who stood there must be clapped into the witches' tower on the Zwinger, but to do this he must have a warrant from the Kurfürst. He must also return with at least half a company of crossbow-men to this valley and root out all heresy and witchcraft. Without saying a word he mounted his horse and rode out of shot of his dreadful neighbors. Then he called out: "The examination can take place in Heidelberg, my business here is at an end. Sergeant, you deliver the

witch and incendiary into the tower." He then set spurs to his horse, ordered the other officers in the village to follow him and trotted away as quick as he possibly could down the valley, still in mortal terror of being pursued by this conventicle of witches and heretics. The sergeant and the officer placed the fettered witch between their horses and thus brought her to the village, when being bound together with the peasant to a cart they made their way to the Tower. The Miller had in the meanwhile taken his boy by the arm; they went into the house to the old Martha. Erastus remained behind; he went up close to the young Priest, who stood silently leaning against a pear tree. "Magister Laurenzano," said the wretched father in a husky voice, "is there any truth in the statement made by the witch?" The young Priest remained silent. He looked down as if overwhelmed. "Did you entice Lydia by night to the Holtermann?" now shrieked the Physician in wild despair. The Priest bowed his head. The tall physician fell prostrate on the ground. His companions sprang forwards and carried him to one of the carts, whilst the Priest with his face buried in his hands hastened away.

All was once more still in front of the Miller's

house. The frightened fowls ran hither and thither in the down-trodden grass. The mill-wheels clattered their monotonous old song, and gaily gleamed the rivulet in the bright midday sun, while many colored butterflies and dark dragonflies hovered around it. The passionate sobbing of women arose from the interior of the mill. After a while, Father Werner and his son appeared at the edge of the wood, both bearing knapsacks on their backs. The Miller knew, what to expect at the return of the Magistrate and made his way to the nearest frontier. Red-headed George on the other hand seemed not to consider the matter in so serious a light; he followed after his enraged progenitor quite calmly. "Father do not hurry so," he said panting, "the Heidelberg police are always late."

CHAPTER VI.

WHILST the cart was rolling slowly along the Neckar valley, Erastus gradually regained his composure. His daughter's image in all its purity and goodness appeared before his eyes. This harmless child might have been led astray, but had never been depraved. The humiliated father called to mind every conversation which she had had in his presence with the Priest, and felt fully convinced that morally his child was pure and unspotted, whatever might have been the cause of the extraordinary nightly adventure. He begged his companions to drive quicker, as he longed to interrogate Lydia face to face. The cart rolled rapidly through the streets of the town, though it trailed up the steep Schlossberg much too slowly for the impatient Erastus. But on the carter wishing to drive over the draw-bridge he found the entry blocked up. A vehicle guarded by four riders had

just driven into the court-yard. Near a police-officer of the Palatinate sat with fettered hands the former Parson, Adam Neuser. Wearied and dejected he gazed straight before him. His hair had become grayer, his complexion more sun-burnt. Otherwise the flight with its many privations appeared to have agreed with him better than the boozing life at the Hirsch. He had wandered much about the world, but had been unable to make without recommendations, without testimonials, without a name, any position for himself. Fortune and his star had abandoned him. Thus utterly discouraged, degraded as to body and soul, with torn clothing and but a few pence in his pockets, he found himself in a tavern near the Danube where he had put up for the night, next to the children's room. Whilst the heat from the hot kitchen warmed delightfully his stiffened limbs, and he listened to the childish prattle of the children, a longing to see his own family once more overpowered him. It seemed to him as if his wife brought to him their youngest child, which wrapped in a woollen cloth felt as warm as the chimney against which he leant, and the little one placed his cheek against his father's and nibbled at it, as if to try,

whether he tasted as good as did its mother. And next he saw his second little daughter stumbling about before him, and who only now beginning to talk called all four-footed animals from the horse downwards "wau" and all winged creatures from the fly upwards "bibì" and mankind "man". And his little Jack showed him his slate with the exercises which he had written, and the butterflies which he had caught in the garden. A heavy sadness came over the stout Parson, and he shut his eyes, as do the chickens, by raising the lower eyelid upwards, whilst the upper remained stationary, as was his wont, whenever he felt gently moved, and he fell asleep. In his dreams he fancied himself once more in his comfortable chair near the round table at the Hirsch in Heidelberg, and Chancellor Probus congratulated him in a friendly manner on his return. "All is forgiven and forgotten. As a matter of course," he distinctly heard the Chairman of their meeting say in his deep tones. At these words of the honored gentleman so intense was the joy that came over Parson Neuser that he awoke, and called out as did Doctor Luther at Koburg: "Home, home, home!" He trusted certainly that his wife had burnt the

dangerous papers in good time. He did not think of the mad address which he had written in a moment of drunken intoxication to Sultan Selim II., and with his usual buoyancy he imagined, that if the worst came to the worst he would get off with a mild punishment. He surrendered himself up to the magistrate at Amberg, who immediately sent him on to Heidelberg, where the trial of his companions was still taking place. Erastus was glad, that Neuser did not notice him. He did not feel inclined to greet this foolish man who had drawn this calamity on himself and his family. But the gate still remained closed and Erastus fretted with impatience at the enforced delay. Finally the trotting of horses and the rattling of a cart was heard within. Another cart guarded by armed men escorting a prisoner appeared. This time however it was Sylvanus who sat near the officer. The once so stately man looked pale and haggard, his eyes were sunken and an expression of resigned despondency lay on his wan face. At his feet sat his nine-year old son, who was allowed by order of the kind-hearted Kurfürst to accompany him to his prison, although the clergymen of the court had violently opposed this soul-destroying in-

dulgence on the part of the Kurfürst. The prisoner was being taken to Mannheim, so as to prevent any communication between himself and Neuser. On seeing Erastus, Sylvanus stretched out his hands towards him as if imploring for aid. The physician also raised his hand, but let it drop wearily down, as if to express how powerless he himself was. He was thinking of some kindly expression when the driver whipped up the horses and they rolled under the dark gate-way. Immediately on reaching his apartment Erastus inquired for Lydia. She had gone to pay a visit to Frau Belier, as she had only expected her father at a late hour, still she might be back at any moment. Erastus' eye now caught sight of a large envelope among his papers, bearing the seal of the Church Council, but addressed to him in his mere capacity of Doctor of Medicine. Surprised he broke it open, expecting some fresh misfortune. The youthful President Zuleger informed him in brief terms that the Church Council had found it advisable to issue their ban of excommunication over him. His conscience would sufficiently explain to him the causes of this step. "No Pope who at any time sent forth the *fulmen* of excommunication ever did it with more comfort

to himself," hissed Erastus. Till he could again be admitted to participate in the Communion of the Lord's Supper, it added, he was forbidden to attend the meetings of the Church Council. Trembling with rage and emotion he held in his lame hand the document, whilst he seized his hat with the other, saying to the terrified maid-servant: "I must go immediately to the Prince." The anxious old woman wanted to induce him to take some refreshment, but he hurried out, merely leaving word that Lydia should wait for him at home, as he had something important to tell her.

The Kurfürst was sitting in his private room in the new court, which we have already described, as Erastus requested the page to beg an audience in his name. Utterly worn out by his exertions the wearied man heard the Prince within talking loudly and earnestly. After a time the Magistrate, Hartmann Hartmanni appeared at the door and passed him by without notice. Now at length was Erastus allowed to enter.

"I was about to send for you this afternoon," said the stout Prince good-naturedly, "as it is not my habit to condemn any one unheard. Sit down. What we have to talk about, will not be decided

within the hour." The wearied physician gloomily took his seat on the chair pointed out to him. "The report of the spiritual members of the Church Council on the arian clergymen has been sent in," began the Kurfürst. "Before discussing your matter, I should like to hear what you think about it?"

"The theological gentlemen have not deemed it necessary to send me a copy," said Erastus coldly.

"Did you not attend the preliminary meetings as to the result of the inquiry?"

"What advantage would it have been to me?" replied Erastus bitterly. "In Your Gracious Highness' Church Council there are three kinds of Counsellors. The Jurists read the documents and report their contents. The learned Doctors do not read yet nevertheless report on them, the Theologians read them and report totally differently to what is written in them. When I saw that I remained away."

"Your old song," growled the Kurfürst fretfully. "But now I must read you a report instead of your doing so to me. First of all then," he said turning over the leaves of the report above men-

tioned, "these gentlemen enjoin on me, that whosoever acquits those blasphemers, is as much an abomination in the sight of God, as the blasphemers themselves." Erastus shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. "The first part refers to the blasphemies, invectives, and repudiation of the Christian dogmas by these clergymen, as well as their endeavours to unite themselves with the Turks. All the points in Sylvanus' libel are clearly marked out, and it is thus evident, that the Inspector intended to taint the world with his blasphemies. Do you differ from this opinion?" .

"No," answered Erastus, "Sylvanus' letter deserves punishment. But I cannot possibly look upon Neuser's ridiculous composition as a serious production, more especially as it is endorsed: *potes omitti*. I believe that the foolish man wrote it in a drunken mood, and though he read it again when more sober, he was too lazy to burn the document and wrote instead: 'need not be forwarded.' Sylvanus has been however severely punished by his long imprisonment and regrets his aberration sincerely. Most certainly those two cannot go unpunished, but the only question is what punishment those gentlemen consider fitting?"

"That is just the point," said the Kurfürst sorrowfully. "These theologians continually refer to the divine law as it is written in the Books of Moses. There it is commanded, to stone such blasphemers, to pierce them with the sword, to burn them. The words of the Vth Book of Moses Chapter 13 are clear. 'If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom or thy friend which is as thine own soul entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him, thine hand shall be the first upon him to put him to death and afterwards the hand of all the people, and thou shalt stone him with stones that he die because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God.'" The Kurfürst put down the report and looked earnestly at Erastus.

"Do those gentlemen really wish to introduce stoning into the Palatinate?" asked Erastus mockingly.

"No," answered the Kurfürst. "Further on it is stated, 'It is certain that as to this *qualitas, circumstantia*, or fact, namely as regards stoning, the

christian authorities are not bound thereto, but that they may make use of the sword, or hanging or some other means of destroying life. If however the sin is not visited upon the head of him who has sinned, God will pour out his wrath upon the entire people, who have not rooted out the transgressor. But to increase and call forth God's wrath which has already been kindled as shown by the plague, would be the most horrible cruelty towards the entire christian community.' "

"To calmly sit in the lofty rooms of the chancellory, and to offer up an atoning sacrifice to the angel of the plague on the green-cloth of the table, is much easier," said Erastus bitterly, "than to oppose him on the sick-bed and to fumigate his haunts. I think however that Your Highness can be at rest. Our God is not so revengeful as are those pious learned men of God."

"True, true," sighed the Kurfürst, "but these gentlemen point out that further on God has commanded in Moses V. Chapter 13 thus that the inhabitants of a city fallen from God shall be smitten with the sword even to the small children, and those that prophesy falsely shall be

rooted out whether they turn from their ways or not."

"Fine, fine," said Erastus angrily. "Then indeed was Pius IV. right when he slew four thousand Waldensees in Calabria and destroyed their villages, trees and vineyards. The Duke of Guise was justified at Vassy in shooting women and children. The Jesuit Possevin was right when he led two thousand arquebusiers against the Protestants in Piedmont. Verily it is so written! Fie, upon the fools!"

"Truly," continued the Kurfürst. "What difference would there be between me and those bloody men at Paris and Madrid, if I were to follow out such advice? They write to me, that they themselves would be responsible for the wrath of God, which has already been kindled, if they prolonged the finite life of the blasphemers, and suffered the Honor of God which has been trodden under foot by so many varied damnable blasphemies, to remain thus trampled upon through a godless leniency. It is all very well for them to talk. They do not know what it means to dip a pen and wipe out a human life by one's own signature."

"Your Gracious Highness' christian conscience is more satisfying to me than the wisdom of the Church Council and all the Faculties. I pray God may keep both your conscience and heart strong in this matter. But what has Your Gracious Highness decided upon?"

"The matter is not yet ripe for sentence," said the Prince. "I will ask my brother in Dresden to look over the report of the trial, as well as the theologians at Zurich, that thereby Judges may look into the case, who cannot be suspected of personal enmity against the accused. We disciples of Calvin dare not in matters of general belief be more sanguinary, or appear more lax than those of Luther or Zwingli."

Erastus bowed his head assentingly.

"The Theologians also demand that a codicil be added to the inquiry," continued the Kurfürst with a troubled look.

"Sylvanus in his letters to the Transylvanians mentions several as holding the same views as himself who would be willing to migrate thither, Neuser does the same in his letter to the Sultan. Being asked during the trial, who these accomplices

might be, Sylvanus named Neuser, Neuser, Sylvanus. In the same way Vehe mentioned Suter, and Suter Vehe. The Church Council thinks therefore that these matters call for a strict inquiry, or searching inquisition."

"That means," cried Erastus excitedly, "that the prisoners must be racked till they name as accomplices any one who may be opposed to Olevianus. Quotes this ruffianly fox any scriptural authority for such a proceeding?"

"Certainly," said the Kurfürst taking up the report once more. "The Lord says Moses V. 13. 14.: *Tunc inquires, investigabis ac interrogabis diligenter.* That is 'thou shalt inquire, interrogate and investigate diligently.' The Lord commands such a diligent and accurate investigation, in order that the authorities may not overlook such evils, or become careless, inattentive or drowsy. That such sin be not committed, it is not sufficient that the prisoners acknowledge their own blasphemies, they must likewise be compelled to name their accomplices. And for that cause as God does not command this diligence with one word alone, but insists upon it with three distinct words, and says: *inquires, investigabis ac interrogabis diligenter*, it is certain

that the authorities who remained satisfied with the wicked lies of the prisoners, would act with remissness." The Kurfürst laid down the documents.

"Horrible!" cried out Erastus.

"Calm yourself," said the Prince. "Torture would in this case only render the matter worse. I shall not permit it."

"God reward you, gracious Prince, for making the council of evil doers of no avail."

"Justice must be on both sides," said the Prince thoughtfully. "What I am about to say to you now will perhaps not meet with so much approval from you." Saying this he took up another bundle of papers, while his brow became overcast. "The Church Council informs me that it has been forced to issue the ban of excommunication over you, which as a spiritual court it has the authority to do, through the power given by Christ to his Church, without asking the consent of the Sovereign of the land, nay more even against him in person."

"To his Church," cried Erastus. "Since when however do the few counsellors mentioned by the Sovereign, constitute the Church."

"Let us drop that matter for the moment," replied the Kurfürst. "For the present let us inquire into the cause of this step. Here is the deposition of Dr. Pigavetta, accusing you of being the especial head of the Arian conspiracy."

"Pigavetta," ejaculated Erastus.

"Calm yourself; if I doubted you, you would not be sitting here but in the great Tower. The facts adduced by the Italian Doctor, do not amount to much. That you went often to Ladenburg with Xylander and even drove out with him, that Sylvanus also as he was being brought in here begged you to warn Neuser, that you in every case have taken under your care and protection the imprisoned blasphemers does not prove anything to me. Here however is the sworn assertion that you have concealed Neuser's papers and hidden them in your apartment, as they would never be sought for in the Castle itself." The Kurfürst stopped short.

"Will Your Gracious Highness order my apartment to be searched from cellar to garret; if a line of Neuser's be found, let my head be laid between my feet," said Erastus coldly.

"For your sake I am sorry, but not to draw

down on myself the reproach of partiality, I could not spare you this." The Prince summoned a page by knocking on the table, and ordered the Amtmann Hartmann Hartmanni to be admitted. The Amtmann appeared at the door holding a bundle of papers under his arm. From his remarks it could be gathered that he had already fulfilled his commission whilst Erastus was being retained in audience. The astonished physician fixed his eyes on the Prince. This proceeding during his absence was new to him. It showed him, how low he had already fallen.

"You have completed the search of the papers belonging to my Counsellor?" asked the Kurfürst.

"No great search was necessary," replied Herr Hartmann. "Neuser's papers laid on the top."

"How!" called out the Kurfürst and Erastus at the same time. The Magistrate handed some papers over to the Prince.

"The plague take it!" called out Frederic the Pious, looking at Erastus with flaming eyes.

Erastus pressed forwards and turned the papers

over with trembling hands. "A letter of Neuser's to Blandrata, a document from Beckhess the Transylvanian ambassador, letters of the Superintendent David in Klausenburg, letters of Vehe, Suter, and Sylvanus . . ." Angrily he threw the bundle down on the table. "I do not know anything about these letters. A rascally trick to destroy me! Where did you find these papers, Amtmann?"

"In your desk."

The Kurfürst looked stedfastly at Erastus, as if he wished to read to the bottom of his soul. "Remember, most Gracious Lord," said the physician, "that for months a scaffolding has stood before my windows, and that anyone who wishes can enter my apartment."

The prince appeared for a while to struggle within himself, and then asked. "Did you discover anything else?"

The Magistrate smiled mockingly, and handed a note over to Erastus. "Is that your hand-writing, Counsellor?"

Erastus cast a glance at the writing. "Yes, it is."

"This letter lay also among Neuser's papers, most Gracious Lord," said the Amtmann. "Hear what the Counsellor writes to this conspirator. 'Dear Herr Adam! I have received your letter and quite agree with you. Matters are going on well, to-morrow you will receive the required pass, and then follow my directions exactly in all things, greet the Inspector. Your friend!' Does Your Highness now believe that a conspiracy of the Arians exists in Your Highness' lands, to lead the Palatinate to Talmudism and Mahommedanism?"

"Did you write this, Erastus?" asked the Kurfürst.

The exhausted man's whole body trembled, the words choked in his throat as he answered: "I have never written to Neuser . . . as far as I can recollect. . . . He never asked me for credentials, and I never promised him any."

"Not even last summer, when Neuser used his vacation, in endeavoring to obtain an office in Transylvania?" asked the Amtmann.

"I know nothing about this. The letter is a forgery."

"Then these letters must also be forgeries," re-

plied the Amtmann mockingly, handing over another bundle of papers to the physician. Erastus looked at them and turned pale. "These are letters from Bullinger to me, that is if you have not mixed some counterfeits with them."

The Amtmann turned to the Kurfürst. "From this letter of the Zürich Theologian may be gathered, how inimically and hostilely the accused was wont to speak to strangers of the Church Council of the Palatinate of which he was a member."

Erastus replied: "To strangers? I think I daily said to the Prince what I wrote to Bullinger."

The Kurfürst looked angrily at him: "That does not excuse your treachery. You are not allowed to calumniate my Counsellors to the Swiss. What more?" added he turning to the Amtmann.

"I found nothing else among the papers belonging to the Counsellor, but in a gipsire belonging to his daughter Lydia was this note, in which some unknown person makes an assignation with her of an evening on the secluded Holtermann, as

he has important communications to make concerning her father." Violently did Erastus pluck the note from his hand. His head was dizzy. This then was the secret appointment which caused Lydia to dislocate her foot. In what terrible hands might his child find herself?

"How did the Maiden explain the note?" asked the Kurfürst coldly.

"She refused any explanation, till she had spoken with her father."

The Kurfürst laughed derisively. On this Erastus fell fainting to the ground. Busy the whole day previous, without his night's rest, hunted down since the early morning, fasting, prey to the most violent feelings, the sickly physician succumbed rather to anger, weariness, and exasperation than to fear.

"The best confession," said the Prince gloomily. "Take him to the Tower, but treat him gently. He has rendered me and the Palatinate good service; the Lord have mercy on him for wishing to undo them."

"And Your Highness will still not permit the question by rack to be used on the plainly ob-

durate prisoners, who are wilfully keeping back the truth from the authorities?"

"I will not longer stand in the way of the conduct of the trial," said the Prince sorrowfully. "Do nothing cruel except through strict necessity. But I will have light in this darkness. If yonder man betrayed me, whom indeed can I trust?"

The Prince left the room with an expression of the profoundest melancholy, the Amtmann however called in the pages from the ante-chamber, who raised up Erastus and sprinkled water over him, till he came to himself. But the wretched man only opened his eyes, in order to find himself taken off to the Tower. His look horrified all the inhabitants of the Castle, who saw him pale as death tottering off supported by two officers. "None but a convicted criminal could possibly look so broken down. The consciousness of his treachery is stamped upon his countenance," remarked the court servant Bachmann, who had formerly ever numbered among the friends of the Counsellor. "I never saw such a picture of an evil conscience. Man is a weak creature," he said consolingly to Barbara who appeared weeping at the

door, "and the Devil always tempts the best most severely."

"Alas, how can I break this to my young mistress," cried the old woman. "Even the search through the house has nearly killed her."

CHAPTER VII.

As Lydia on that eventful day returned from her visit to Frau Belier, who had detained her rather longer than usual with her chattering, she found the old servant weeping in the ante-chamber. The Amtmann and a police officer were in her master's rooms, sobbed Barbara, opening all the drawers searching for papers in the writing desk and taking away whatever seemed good to them. Surprised and indignant Lydia entered the room and asked the Amtmann, what all this meant. Herr Hartmann comforted her with delicate compliments, which he later accompanied with vulgar familiarities. The angry girl pushed the black-guard from her as he attempted to stroke her cheeks, lisping something about the golden locks of Berenice. He however laughed mockingly: "We shall get to know each other better later on, my little dove will think better of all this. He, he,

he. Be not so bashful, he, he, he." Lydia turned her back on him and went into the neighboring room to look for her father. But the Magistrate followed her even there, regretting that he was compelled to examine her personal property. "Look wheresoever it pleases you," said the indignant girl. But he had already felt the pouch, hanging at her side. Angrily she jumped back but the gipsire remained in his hands. At that moment she remembered that Laurenzano's letter of assignation was still in it. Alas! why had she not destroyed it sooner? With the courage of despair the frightened maiden threw herself on the impudent man endeavoring to regain her property, he however held the note high above his head and read it with malicious eagerness. "Ha! it is thus, on the Holtermann! The demure maiden will soon have to sing another tune," he said laughing mockingly, and whilst Lydia burst into tears, the scoundrel packed up the papers together and left the house. Lydia remained there thoroughly overwhelmed. In breathless anxiety, with beating heart she waited at her window to see her father on his return from his audience with the Prince. Only he could advise her in her distress, and

compel the impudent official to return the letter. Every minute seemed an eternity. Finally after long hours of misery her father appeared at the gate of the new court. But how! Supported by two jailors, with a wild look and ruffled hair, almost a corpse. The terrified girl felt like throwing herself out of the window to reach her beloved father. She flew down the steps, to see him once again, before that he was torn away. Alas, even at the second landing she felt that she could never reach him. When she stood breathless in the court he had already disappeared. Loudly did she call her lost father's name, like a child astray in the woods. The neighbors looked out of their windows sympathizing with the weeping girl who had ever been a favorite in the castle. The stone figures above almost seemed to look down on her with pity. In her distress Felix appeared. The artist at that moment seemed to her like some messenger from God. In his arms was she able to shed her first soothing tears. "I will bring thy father back to thee," said Felix, "even if I must dig him out of the Tower with this dagger." Comforted she looked up at the strong bold man. But a hard hand was laid on her shoulder; Herr Hart-

mann ordered her to follow him to the Witches' Tower. "Whoever lays his hand on my affianced bride is a dead man," cried Felix, placing himself before Lydia in a determined manner; he had scarcely however made an attempt to draw his dagger, when he was knocked down on the stone pavement at the foot of the staircase. The cowardly Magistrate had wisely given the order, to watch the artist closely. A cunning blow from one of the officers felled Felix backwards down the steps, and when he again recovered his senses, he found himself near the well, with Bachmann and Barbara bathing a severe wound at the back of his head. "Where is Lydia?" asked the artist in a weak voice. Barbara wept and Bachmann answered for her: "Do not ask, no one ever returns from the place where she now is." Scarcely had Felix comprehended these words, than his entire consciousness and full strength returned. He ordered a damp cloth to be bound around his head, and went at once across the new court to lay his complaint before the Kurfürst. But the Page came back with the answer, he should apply to the Amtmann. He again prayed for admittance, not to complain of the injury done to himself, but to

demand the restoration of his affianced bride; the officials refused however to announce him a second time, and on his endeavoring to force his way in, the sentries levelled their halberds at his breast. Dazed he returned back to the Burghof. He could do nothing however but storm ragingly in the ante-chamber in the presence of the Courtiers and the servants. He only met with disturbed faces, and heard half-uttered warnings, to be careful not to sympathize over much in a charge of witchcraft. In those moments, in which he found himself opposed to much cowardice and contemptible selfishness, he discovered in Frau Belier a faithful, brave, and prudent friend, who felt more than a lukewarm sympathy for Klytia. Having met with but deaf ears in the court, the young man hastened to the gable-house on the market-place. The Frenchwoman had ejaculated a series of "*mon Dieu, mon Dieu,*" on hearing Felix's account of what had taken place. When however in his rage the Italian declared that nothing was left for him to do but to stab the villainous Amtmann in the open street, she plucked the dagger out of his belt and locked it up in her cup-board, assuring him that such a deed would be the most certain means of destroying

Klytia. He listened unwillingly to the advice of the Chatterbox, who thus opposed all his plans. The screaming of the insupportable parrot, which the louder the talking became swung all the more contentedly on his ring, shrieking in shriller tones, put the young Maestro in such a rage, that he would willingly have killed it. Frau Belier warned him most decidedly against making any attack; the only person who could aid in this matter was the Countess at the Stift Neuburg, and the brave little lady hastened thither. Felix however rushed out again with a dim impulse of rendering himself useful to his friends. Restlessly he walked around the Witches' Tower, near which he found excited groups, looking up at the windows, but none could tell him on which side Lydia had been imprisoned. The heartless remarks made by the people cut him to the quick. "Dost thou really take the pretty fair-haired creature to be a witch?" he heard a young man ask in a commiserating tone. "The Devil likes pretty girls and is not content with old hags like the herb-picker," was the coarse answer. It was well, that Frau Belier had locked up his dagger, as otherwise he would have stabbed the man for this callous brutality. He

asked an old man standing at his side, whether he believed that the young girl would be set at liberty.

"Ah! Sir," answered the old man. "I have now lived forty years opposite this Tower, and have never yet seen a prisoner come out of these doors except with racked limbs, and the most of them only on their way to the stake." When he saw how pale Felix grew and how his eyes rolled, he added, "My dear Sir, if you had been obliged, as I have been, to hear at night time the harrowing shrieks and dreadful moans of those being tortured, you would wish as I do, that those suspected should at once be burnt, for the idea, that perhaps an innocent person is being thus racked, is enough to drive one mad."

"And is there no help, none?" stammered Felix.

"If Lucifer himself, or the All-merciful God does not carry off the prisoners with the aid of His hosts through the air, none," said the old man, who with a "God bless you," returned to his house no longer able to continue a conversation on this dreadful subject.

"Through the air," stammered Felice looking up at the tower, he walked round it, he counted the

windows. He believed it would be possible to climb into the Tower from the Garden of the Augustine convent without being noticed. He would thus from the upper rooms search cell after cell and run anyone through who prevented him from seeing Lydia. If he could not succeed in carrying her off, he would kill her first and then himself, or set the Tower on fire and perish in the flames in case they could not manage to escape in the confusion caused by the flames. After carefully considering the subject, he determined on a plan. An old chestnut tree at the back part of the Tower rendered it possible for an active and daring climber to reach a window, which he certainly could open. The way out must be down a rope ladder or with the help of a dagger. The young man was so lost in thought, that he did not notice that he was being watched. His plans for rescue could almost have been read on his face. Once it seemed to him, as if a man on the other side of the road stopped as if to address him. But looking across the individual turned his back. It was Pigavetta. Felix took no further notice. He hastily returned to his workshop in the Schloss, and after carefully examining his borers, chisels and saws, he set aside those which seemed

to him to be the fittest, and then began to work at knotting together with trembling hand a rope ladder long enough to reach from the roof of the Witches' Tower to the ground.

In the meantime Frau Belier had hastened to the Stift Neuburg, and the news she brought caused not a little consternation to the Abbess as she sat in her dreary little room. "I shall immediately see the Kurfürst," said the old lady. "His grace will believe, that I know as well as this lewd Magistrate, whether a maiden who till lately was under the protection of these holy walls, is a child of light or espoused to the Devil. Oh! these *exercitia*, these *exercitia*," she added sighing, "they were the cause of all this misery."

A carriage was quickly harnessed and the good lady hurried together with the exiled Huguenot to the Castle as fast as the horses could gallop. "A rare visit, my Lady Cousin," greeted the Prince looking in astonishment at the two ladies. Quickly and earnestly did the Abbess explain the motives of her visit, and related what she herself had heard as the cause of Lydia's arrest. With a correct instinct she ascribed Lydia's adventure by night to the assignation made by Laurenzano, for the country people

had immediately reported to the eagerly listening nuns the event which had taken place on the Kreuzgrund. The Kurfürst listened attentively. "That is a nice sort of fellow, that Pigavetta has brought into my dominions; but how did you come to know that he had a love affair with Erastus' daughter."

The Countess hesitated. But remembering that nothing less than the life of her darling pupil was at stake, she proceeded tremblingly and repentingly with her account of the dreadful *exercitia* which had led her to find out Paul's sentiments towards Klytia, and she exposed the false Priest all the more as she suspected that he himself had forged this accusation against Lydia, to revenge his unrequited love. "I never gazed into a blacker soul," she said shudderingly.

"In other words, my Lady Cousin," replied the Kurfürst angrily, "a punishment is once more being inflicted on you and others for having turned your Institution into a refuge for Papists. What has been reported to me is then true; you permitted this black traitor to perform secret masses."

The Countess remained silent and looked down confused. The Kurfürst Frederic, enraged at this

discovery was about to dismiss the two petitioners without another word, had not Frau Belier, whose husband he knew to be a stern Huguenot, beseeched him most affectingly, not to permit the poor imprisoned Lydia to suffer for the sins of the wolf in sheep's clothing, he therefore added that he would order the Amtmann to report to him.

"Oh, most Gracious Lord," prayed the lively Frenchwoman throwing herself on her knees before him, "you do not know the horrible treatment in the Witches' Tower. They will drive the poor child mad, they will frighten her to death, if she must pass the night there."

"Order must exist," said the Kurfürst. "Master Ulrich will be told that he will answer with his head for the safety of the maiden. No person must be allowed to enter her cell till the Magistrate comes in person to fetch her out. I myself will vouch, that no hair of her head shall be injured, if her innocence can be proved. She who however runs about the woods at night, and kisses parsons on the cross roads, cannot complain if the police lay hold of her. I am myself sorry for the pretty child, but for the moment I only know your side of the story, and

not what the Magistrate may have to say. Till her trial is at an end, she may keep company with her father in the great Tower, and that is all I can do in the matter."

The ladies perceived that nothing more was to be obtained from the Kurfürst, and so as not to enrage the Prince against their *protégée*, they returned sadly homewards.

Towards evening Laurenzano called on Frau Belier, to demand back his dagger. "Your extravagant ideas would now answer no purpose," said the little woman, "for to-morrow Lydia will be moved to the Tower to be with her father, which is a kindness for her and him." She hastily related to the Neapolitan how she had managed to obtain this from the Kurfürst. But the passionate young artist swore by the eyes of the Madonna, that he would not suffer his affianced bride to be terrified for another hour in the dreadful tower, if he could prevent it, and he explained to her, the plans which he had formed for her rescue. "You are a fool with your plans," said the spirited little woman. "To set fire to the Tower, kill her, kill yourself, what is the use of such help for the poor child? And allowing that you could carry her off, where will you

bring her to, and how thankful will she feel if through your foolery here her father's fate is rendered worse?"

The artist gazed at her in an inane manner and declared he must do something, if it were only to kill himself, but he could not endure the thought that Lydia was suffering and that he lived unable to help her. As Frau Belier saw that she could not move him from his plans she took to temporizing. "Wait then," she said, "till Lydia and her father are together and then save both at one and the same time."

"I cannot wait."

"Not wait till morning? Are you mad when it is a question of Lydia's life and happiness?" Felix bit his lips furiously.

"*Filou Laurenzano*," shrieked out the bird in a shrill voice. "*Malade!to!*" cursed the artist aiming in his blind rage a blow of the dagger which had been returned to him at the parrot, with unfortunately so good an effect that the head of the bird flew against the opposite wall, whilst the body with a fluttering of the wings fell to the ground. Loudly shrieked the Frenchwoman. "Detestable murderer, what has this poor creature then done to you, that

you should slay it?" The artist looked about him with so much frenzy in his eyes, that the frightened woman forgot the bird and sprang away from the raving madman. "Oh well now," she called out, "murder me also, that will do much towards helping Lydia," and she burst into convulsions of tears.

Felix stared vacantly at the quivering body of the bird, and saw a red pool of blood tinging the floor. Finally he slowly passed both his hands over his eyes and forehead: "Pardon me, gracious lady, sorrow has turned my brain. You are right, I can undertake nothing now, till I am calmer myself. What you say is likewise true, Lydia will not fly with me without her father, and as all the plans of the Castle are in my hands, it will be easier for me to rescue father and daughter from the great Tower, than Lydia alone from the Witches' Tower." The little woman seemed apparently to agree eagerly with these views, in order to calm the maddened man. Her hope was, that the Kurfürst would set Lydia free the following day, and the conviction that the prudent Erastus would never undertake an attempt at flight calmed her as to that matter. So she dismissed Felix with the best wishes and re-

joiced when she finally succeeded in getting rid of the lunatic. She then with bitter tears raised up the body of her many colored pet and kissed it. "How much I must love Lydia," she said, "that I did not scratch out the eyes of this wicked man. But he won't get off so easily." And she carefully dried up the blood of the bird with a fine cloth, and weeping laid the relic in an artistically carved box.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE following morning a stormy scene took place in the private study of the Kurfürst in the new court. The Magistrate Hartmann Hartmanni was seeking refuge behind a leather backed arm chair to protect himself from the wrath of the Count of the Palatinate who pressed forward towards him, upbraiding him with flaming countenance.

"You shall set them all free," cried the thick set Kurfürst, "all. Do you understand?"

"If Your Gracious Highness would only remember," replied the obdurate Magistrate, "how great a calamity has come ^{over} the Palatinate through this pestilence. And now should those who have been proved in a certain measure to have introduced this pestilence through their devilish arts be set free, among their fellow creatures, the first who would fall victims to their wrath would be Your

Highness' faithful servants who considered it necessary to oppose these sorceresses."

"Who has told you that this pestilence is the work of witchcraft?" replied the Kurfürst. "Only yesterday the Church Council reported to me in a long document—there it lies—that it was plain to all the world, that as a punishment for the blasphemies of the Arians in Ladenburg and Heidelberg the plague had broken out in Petersthal and Schönau, to-day witches and magicians are accused of being responsible for all this misery. Whom shall I believe, you or Olevianus?"

Herr Hartmann Hartmanni assumed a wise and deliberative expression. "Will Your Highness only consider that the one does not exclude the other. Through the veritable belief in God and the grace of God which accompanied this, the art of the witches was restricted and their hand enfeebled, scarcely however had Sylvanus, Neuser and Erastus tainted the land with their secret blasphemies, than the Almighty withdrew his countenance, and then the allies of Satan had free play. Or is it not then a fact, that immediately after the disclosure of the heresy, the magic arts came to the fore?" The Kurfürst shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"If Your Grace does not believe me or the Church Council, the Juristical Faculties of Heidelberg or Tübingen might be called upon for a legal opinion."

"Go to the Devil with your Faculties," roared out the old gentleman, "who every year send hundreds to the stake for the Judas reward of twelve golden gulden. Where do you think the bones of Luther and Calvin would be to-day, if the Kurfürst of Saxony and the Honorable Council of the town of Geneva had requested the legal opinion of the University Jurists? Under heaven I know of no more venal people than those who live by their legal opinions."

"Then I can only think of the witch's test."

"What sort of test is that?"

"Let the young woman be thrown into the Neckar, should she rise to the top she is clearly a witch. Should she sink, then is she innocent and escapes prosecution."

"And if she drowns or dies of fright, do you bring her back to life again," asked the Kurfürst with an angry look.

"Then is nothing to be done," said the Magistrate surlily.

"If the herb picking woman was found with devilish vermin," said the Kurfürst, "sitting near the Holtermann or by the Linsenteich at a time of night when people are usually asleep, you can try her and execute her, but Erastus' daughter is to be set free to-day I tell you."

"Would Your Grace only condescend to take into His high consideration, what an evil impression would be produced, if the old witch were tried for being at night on the Kreuzweg, and the young woman known to be guilty of the same crime were set at liberty?"

The Kurfürst once more approached so close to the Amtmann that that worthy again withdrew behind his arm-chair. "I know you, Herr Amtmann," he said peremptorily. "I know of your amours in Ladenburg and Mosbach. You are lusting to proceed against a well made woman, to cut the hair from her body and do anything else which may come into your head, because you say, that otherwise the Devil has the power to strengthen her against the rack. You shall not touch with one of your fingers the pious child, whom I have seen praying every Sunday in my church, and I have often felt edified by her hearty worship, even when

the discursive sermons of your spiritual friends were sickening to me. Is this harmless sweet young creature to be considered a devils' harlot? Who can be safe, if such a child is tried by torture?"

"But it has been proved," replied the Amtmann with unheard of obstinacy, "that this very maiden with her hypocritical appearance of virtue, used to walk about at night on the cross-road which of the whole neighbourhood has the worst repute. Three young men from Neuenheim, named by the old woman have confirmed all her statements. They have sworn upon oath to having met on a fine June night of this year Erastus' daughter on the Holtermann and to have wished to lay hold of her, the Maiden however floated on before them like a will-o'-the wisp, and when they thought to have seized her near the haunted ruins of the fallen Chapel she melted into thin air and disappeared."

The Kurfürst looked at the Magistrate with astonished eyes.

"I greatly fear," continued the latter, "that we have to do with one of those sorceresses known to the ancients as Empusæ. A gentle exterior at-

tracts all the men to her; wherever she has been she has bewitched all hearts by her supernatural beauty. She resembles the witch of Bacharach with her golden hair, and perhaps she received like the latter this beauteous adornment as a reward for the *homagium* she paid to Satan." The Kurfürst made a displeased gesture, but the Amtmann continued: "Very suspicious things are said about her. Her maid has been heard to say among other things: that her young Mistress had a green dress which the longer she wore, the better it looked."

"Rubbish."

"In the Stift where I, privately of course, made some inquiries, she bore the name 'the bewitched maiden.' My instructions point out to me, to take particular notice of any who may be considered by public opinion to be concerned with magic. She has also often rocked herself backwards and forwards on the pump-handle, as does the witches' fiddler whenever he plays by the Saubrunnen for the witches' sabbath."

"Twaddle," grunted the old Prince.

"Indicium follows indicium. I have conducted the inquiry with the greatest care. Will Your

Grace try and remember what a terrible whirlwind we had on the 4th *hujus*, which tore slates off roofs, blew down chimneys, and tore up the oldest trees in the park. The Morning of that very day, the young maiden drew water at sunrise out of the well, though she had previously passed the spring, where she could have provided herself more easily. This drawing was nothing but a pretext, to throw three sage-leaves into the well, which together with the repetition of a terrible incantation always calls forth a storm. On her return from this criminal walk she had a blood-red rose in a glass; the Castellan's maid, 'carotty Frances' she is called in the Schloss, asked her where she had picked the flower as no roses grew in the Court-yard, and what answer did the young damsel return? 'From the stone-wreath over your door'!"

"Servants' tales," said the Kurfürst disdainfully. "Of what use would a storm have been to her which broke in her fathers' windows as well as mine."

"She sought an opportunity of alluring the architect Laurenzano. When the storm burst she enticed him from the rocking scaffolding into her room, and got engaged to him at the very hour,

when other Christian maidens were kneeling in terror at the sulphurous lightning and hellish stormwind."

The Kurfürst became pensive. "That was told me by Erastus himself," he thought. "The two circumstances look badly. Who are the three witnesses, before whom she rendered herself invisible?" he then asked of the Magistrate.

"The sons of the landlord of the Rose and Maier the Miller's apprentice from the valley of the Siebenmühlen."

"Bad characters, are they not?"

"Well that is as one thinks. The miller's apprentice is a hard-headed and daring fellow who fears neither witch nor devil. He has even overheard the black mass, performed near the white stone."

"What, do witches' conventicles take place in my dominions?" asked the Kurfürst horrified.

"Not two hours from Your Grace's own town." The eyes of the stout Count became larger and larger. "Your Highness knows the desolate table land above the spring of the valley of the Siebenmühlen; a barren mountain ridge, covered with thistles, blackberry bushes and strewn over with rocks. 'The white stone' is the name of this

desolate spot. Near to this begins the wood which intersects the higher road. It was on Midsummer's day, the miller's man was tracking a stag, when his eye caught sight of a small fire. At first he thought it was a fire lit by the laborers, but on approaching he beheld two huge flames as high as towers, which illuminated the whole mountain with a red and yellow glow, and higher up on the lofty Nistler he beheld a similar yellow light. Around the fire he saw men and women dancing whose black figures, whenever they approached the red fire, stood plainly out so that their shadows reached right up to the crouching man. A curious sound of bells, which tingled to a great distance, whistles and viols sounded horribly exciting in the still night air. He had to restrain his legs forcibly, so that they should not dance likewise, said the man. Through the bushes he perceived masses of people crawling about in the dark. Suddenly the bush before which he stood was brilliantly illumined and he perceived a devil carrying a child's arm as torch, whose fat fed the flame. Behind this monster, who luckily for him had his back turned, came masked and veiled persons. He recognized no one. He felt so frightened that

he threw himself full length on the ground and crawled slowly back to the wood. For the remainder of his life, added the young man, who has not been pampered by the Landsknechte and poachers, he will never forget the fright which he felt when creeping back. The moon shone pale, as if horrified at the atrocities which it saw. On the beech near a crossing, which had stood empty as he came, now sat a devil beating a drum with a fox's tail, so that it sounded afar off: tup, tup, tup. Behind him in the branches sat the fiddler, and played a dance as if to allure the crowd to this place. As the boy crawled past muttering a prayer, without suffering himself to be enticed, a devilish peal of laughter burst behind him and re-echoed through the entire valley. On the Holtermann were likewise four young witches, riding on brooms, and having lights stuck in their backs as signals for the others. He also heard the row of whistles, drums, galloping riders, and ungreased axles. On stoves, pitch-forks, brooms and sticks, in carts drawn by cats, or riding on hares, an army of witches swept close past him. Yelping dogs ran between his feet, and the wings of owls touched his cheeks, so that he lay there

as dead through fright. On creeping further he saw in a ditch a well dressed company of ladies and gentlemen sitting round a table, on which smoked a splendid roast joint and game. The Devil himself sat at the head of the table and amused the company by playing the bagpipe on a black cat. He wore blue and red striped stockings, had a red beard, and a pointed hat adorned with colored ribbons and cock's feathers. As he looked with his fiery eye on the interloper, the latter called out in his fright: 'Oh thou holy and blessed Trinity.' The earth immediately gave a shock, so that the man fell down stunned and then only became aware that he was sitting close to a dead white horse and the bones of the hanged. The field-fare now crept about the ditch in the shape of toads, and the company disappeared in the bushes weeping and sobbing. From that place to the valley of the Seven Mills nothing more occurred, except that he met three hares, one of which had a body like that of a goat. Rendered more courageous the man called out to them: 'Stop thou sorceress in the name of the triune God.' On that they turned into three black ravens and flew away towards the Heiligenberg. Since then

the Devil gets out of Maier's path like a whipped cur as he himself told me."

The Magistrate learned in humanity stopped talking and wiped the perspiration from his brow after this poetic harangue. At first the Kurfürst had looked astonished, then doubtful, and finally listened with scarcely concealed disgust. He now said deliberately: "If anything takes place in the least resembling what you have described, it is, because you permit so many lewd fellows to gather here, who are a torment to all honest people, jugglers, magicians, peddlars with pictures, quacks, spirit-conjurors, exorcists, and other vagrants who travel backwards and forwards between the Bishoprics on the Main and Rhine, a loose lot, who if they are not in league with the devil, are not very far from it."

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"Vagrants would not mask or veil themselves, Most Gracious Sir," answered the Magistrate with a wise look.

"Well and why should Erastus' daughter have been one of those masks?"

"Your Highness knows of the note, by which, as her father maintains, Master Laurenzano makes an appointment with her on the Holtermann."

"Ah yes; and how does that scoundrelly Priest explain his invitation?"

The confused Magistrate cleared his throat: "I own that I have not as yet questioned him on the matter."

"How," roared the Prince. "You have not examined the chief witness? And in the meantime you destroy the character of an innocent maiden simply on the testimony of an old quean and of rascally scoundrels? You are indeed a model magistrate! Did you know that I have been told, that this Laurenzano caused the child all this misery by pretending he wished to speak with her of some important discoveries relating to her father, and yet you do not examine this man?"

"I wanted to do so," said the Amtmann hesitatingly, "but Pigavetta warranted his innocence. Besides this he alone maintains order in Schönau, so that he cannot yet be spared from there."

"Pretty justice," thundered out the enraged Prince. "You let the most guilty person escape scot free, and in the meantime wish to put the innocent body of a poor girl to torture; that is urgent, that cannot be put off! but the examina-

tion of witnesses is not of such importance. Beware, Herr Hartmann Hartmanni that I do not ever catch you again treading these slippery paths."

The Magistrate bowed his bald head with a terrified look. "Before all arrest this Italian Priest," repeated the Kurfürst.

"Herr Pigavetta says" stammered the Magistrate.

"And I tell you," interrupted the infuriated Prince, "that I am beginning to feel suspicious of this Pigavetta. He smuggled in this disguised Jesuit. He wanted to recommend him to me as a tutor for my children. He informed my wife how thoroughly proficient this young man was in astronomy and astrology, and wanted to talk her over into looking into the future, which does not concern us mortal men, and certainly not young wives with old husbands. If this Herr Pigavetta thinks that he can insinuate himself everywhere in my house, he is much mistaken. And now that's enough. You lead the young girl to-day to her father in the Great Tower. There under the care of her father she will be safe from witches and from you. You have to cross-examine the

Priest in Schönaue as to his reason for enticing the maiden to the Kreuzweg, and how the matter stands as regards the miracles he is said to have performed in Schönaue? If anyone of the whole lot appears to me worthy of being suspected of magic, it is that pale Parson, who occupies himself with astrology," and in concluding this speech the excited Count cast a look at the planetary Deities on the new building, under whose protection dwelt his young wife. "The whole day I have on the new building opposite Justice in stone ever before my eyes. I shall break its image to pieces, if I suffer even but once, Right to be trampled upon in my dominions."

The Magistrate bowed low and left the room with a crushed look. When out of the room he was about to open his mouth to ejaculate an oath, but his eye catching sight of a page, he made a grimace intended to represent a smile, as he descended the staircase.

CHAPTER IX.

AN hour after the attack in the court-yard Lydia found herself in a small room with barred windows lying on a bundle of straw alive with vermin. She felt a hard bony hand applying a wet cloth to her forehead. She wished in her gratitude to see who her nurse might be, but the face which met her look was so repulsive, that terrified she once more closed her wearied eyelids. "How did I get here?" she asked herself. Indistinctly she seemed to remember having been jolted in a cart. Once as she opened her eyes, she had seen groups of horrified citizens staring up from the street at her. It still appeared to her as in some dreadful dream that before her stood the terrible tower within the walls of the Zwinger and that she had been dragged along a dark passage.

"You seem to think I have nothing else to do than to wait on you," she heard a coarse gruff voice

saying. "You may go at once to the Devil as far as I am concerned, that would be best for us and you." Therewith the poor fainting creature was shaken so roughly, that Lydia came back to her senses and started up terrified. The dirty woman before her resembled a wicked old dog, having a still more wicked master. One of her eyes had been knocked out, and the red face bore traces of continued ill-treatment. "What must I do, what must I do?" sobbed Lydia vainly endeavoring to break away from the iron gripe of the old woman. "You must acknowledge, at once acknowledge that you are a witch, for if once persons of your kind are allowed time to think over things, the affair drags on twice as long."

"But I am no witch," sighed the wearied child.

"That is what they all say, but did you not go to the Holtermann at night?"

"Yes," sobbed Lydia.

"You see, you see."

"I wished only . . ."

"Only what. We know well what people do who go at night to the Holtermann. Did you not on the day that the storm which uncovered

the roof, broke loose, draw water from the well at sunrise?"

"Draw water, yes, I did that."

"You see, you see."

"I only wished . . ."

"We already know what you wished," croaked the old woman. "Did you not tell carrotty Frances that you practised magic?"

"Never, never," assured Lydia weeping.

"What never, and she says, that you showed her a real rose, which you plucked from the stone wreath over the gate."

"Ah, that was only a joke."

"A joke . . . we will teach you to make such jokes. How often have you ridden out to the White Stone on a broom?"

"Never, certainly never."

"And to the Auerkopf?"

"Never."

"And never to the hollow Chestnut-tree, Dachsbau, or the Nistler?"

"I swear to you I know nothing about all this."

"I am sorry for you little one," said the old woman, and at that moment she resembled a snake,

taking pity on the terrified rabbit. "You are such a nice-looking girl. Confess before it is too late. Think only, of being hung up by a rope and heavy and heavier weights being fastened to your small feet. Oh! dear, oh! dear, how that hurts. None as yet have been able to hold out. Think of the suffering and disgrace inflicted upon you!"

Lydia raised her apron which she bit in mute despair. Her eyes turned pale with horror. She sat there an image of grief, of madness. She heard no longer what the old woman kept repeating. A cold shiver shook her body backwards and forwards. The executioner now himself stepped up and made indecent remarks to her, which however she did not understand. At last the old woman got angry and seizing hold of her by the hair, hauled her up and down: "Confess, you obstinate creature! When did you attend the black mass?" But Lydia felt it not. "Don't make such a to-do," said the executioner. "When she is hanging from the rope, it will all come back to her." Lydia gazed vacantly at him. "Were you not already known as the bewitched maiden at the Stift?" cried he furiously.

"Yes I was, I was!" sobbed the poor child overpowered by grief and fright. "See, she has confessed," said the executioner. "Get out, I have enough of this whimpering." And he aimed a blow with his keys at his wife, who obediently quitted the room. Lydia was once more alone, faintness and weakness deadened her pain, and as the intense heat in the small cell diminished owing to the torrents of rain which poured down outside, she fell asleep. When she awoke with a start out of her lethargy, she heard the bells of the Holy Ghost chime the midnight hour. Her head felt dazed. The examination made by those two horrible creatures entirely confused her mind. The confidence with which she had been told that she was guilty, had bewildered her. She could herself scarcely think, but that through her own guilt she had fallen into such profound wretchedness. Her going to the Holtermann now appeared to her in the light of a terrible crime. Had she not in fact sat near the witch, and perhaps the Wicked One had obtained power over her. Had she not once dreamt, that she was travelling through the air from the Holtermann to the Castle, and had plainly seen the illuminated windows of the town before her? What, if

she in her sleep without being aware of it had through the power of the Evil One, been in reality obliged to ride to the witches' meeting, as many walk about in their sleep during the full moon and on the following morning know nothing about it? Had she been the means of producing the storm, through the Devil putting it into her head to draw water out of the brook at a momentous hour of the morning? Who could know what the relation of this deep well was to the clouds? And had she not in reality spoken in a very heedless manner, when she told red-headed Frances that she had plucked Felix's rose out of the stone wreath? And what a terrible crime it was that amidst the thunder and lightening, as God's wrath was plainly addressed to her, she lay in the arms of the artist and allowed his embraces! A terrible fear came over her. Dreadful thoughts confused her more and more. As the clock struck one Lydia was convinced, that she was a witch and determined to confess everything, in that way she might escape the rack. She knew that she was lost, but she would not suffer herself to be tortured. "If they will only not ask me who taught me magic, and commanded me to go to the Holtermann," sighed the poor child. And

she depicted to herself, how finally they would get out of her that it was Paul. Her terror became boundless. And now it struck two. Then she felt, that these dreadful thoughts would kill her, if they lasted much longer. In her distress she began to repeat all the prayers, hymns and texts, that she knew, and although convulsive fear weighed down her heart, she nevertheless became more tranquil by this means. At last day broke, but no one came to her. She heard how life began in the town. She could explain every sound. The streets re-sounded as ever with merriment. She heard the boys calling, whistling, singing; she heard the barking of dogs, the rattling of carriages, the creaking of wheels, the sound of horses' hoofs, everything went on as usual and no one thought of her grief. A feeling of great bitterness took possession of her young heart. Thus little was the friendship of men worth, in the which her childish mind had so happily believed. How many poor had her father helped! "What would we do, without the Counsellor?" how often had she heard these words from Counsellors, beggars, the healthy, the sick—and now their deliverer sat in the Great Tower, and the people could laugh and chat, and the boys whistle

that insupportable song about the all beauteous Gabrielle. About her also they seemed not to care, and yet they had ever smiled kindly on her as they called her the pretty Lydia. Felix, he indeed would think of her, but then she had seen him lying pale with a bleeding head on the stairs, as they tore her away. Perhaps was he dead, perhaps he also lay in some prison. And the Kurfürst and his Princess, who always used to address her so graciously, when she stood on one side to curtsy to them, could they give her up under their very eyes to these men! She gazed sadly up through her barred windows at the deep blue September sky, in which the long silver summer threads waved about finally to be caught in the bars. Till yet she had childishly imagined her father and herself to be important items in the minds of their fellow citizens. Now it dawned upon her, that not only she herself with her youthful beauty and her cheerful smile, but that even her serious father with all his ability and wisdom could be taken away from this bustle, and the people would live on just the same as ever. With one blow were all the lights extinguished, in which the world had to her unexperienced youth formerly shone. The childish expression was gone

from her face, one single hour had stamped in its place the earnest look of experienced womanhood. But there was nothing dark in this seriousness. Her gentle, modest feelings had now obtained the victory over the bitterness of her heart. "Hast thou not also," said she to herself, "made fun and noise, sung and laughed in the Castle gardens without giving one single thought to the poor prisoners languishing behind their iron bars? Could any man rejoice in life for a single instant, if he were always thinking of those to whom at that instant some wrong were happening . . .? But for the future I will think about it. I will strive daily, that as much happiness may be around me, as I can obtain by opposing sorrow. I will take the part of all who may be innocent and defend them, even if appearances be against them, and will tell them what happened to me. But art thou indeed innocent?" Again she returned to the question of the previous night, as to whether she were really guilty? But the dark thoughts of night time disappeared before the clear light of the September sun, which poured like gold within the prison window. She had acted foolishly, carried away by passion, but had done nothing which deserved such a punishment. And

then the hope returned to her, that God who had freed her from the dark vault of the Michael's church, when no one knew about her, would not surrender her up now to the Wicked One, in whose power she had fallen through that wicked nightly expedition. Perhaps old Father Werner would find the right way to her again, he, or Frau Belier, or the Lady Abbess, or the Kurfürst himself. With a fixed determination to strengthen herself for the struggle she was about to undergo, she ate some of the bread which lay near the window, and drank some water out of the pitcher near by. Then with full confidence in God she looked out through the bars, and felt convinced that the Miller from the Kreuzweg would come again this time with his red-headed boy, or some other faithful friend. Nevertheless a shudder crept over her when she at last heard at mid-day a heavy tread, and the key turned creaking in the door. The dirtily dressed one-eyed old woman entered. This time however she asked cringingly and submissively how it fared with the poor young lady. However little inclined Lydia might feel to heed the ugly creature, she was certain that something must have come to pass which the old woman kept back. Finally it came out, the

Kurfürst had ordered Lydia to be taken to the Great Tower and therefore she must bid farewell to the poor prisoner, for whom she felt so hearty a sympathy. The young lady would, she hoped, mention how kind and gentle she and Master Ulrich had been towards her. Her trial was not yet at an end, and if she blackened Master Ulrich's character, he would repay her for it should she ever be brought to the rack. Lydia let the horrible woman talk on without herself answering. But when however her faithful Barbara appeared, she sank into the arms of her old nurse and comforting tears dispelled half her sorrows. The old nurse was herself half dead through fear, for Master Ulrich had likewise explained and impressed on her, that she also might likewise be accused of being a witch, for not preventing her young mistress from practising witchcraft. Still trembling with fright the faithful soul had great trouble in arranging her young mistress' dress and hair. Finally Lydia was ready and after that Barbara had thrown a scarf around her, she prepared to follow the police-officer to the Castle. At the door stood Master Ulrich with his bundle of keys: "In three days, young lady," he said with a wicked look, "we shall meet

again. The commission on witchcraft always holds its sessions here, for the gentlemen can never do long without me, so beware of your tongue. And even if you escape this time, remember, that the next person that I string up to force out the names of her accomplices, may name you; sooner or later will you be here again. I say nothing more, you will yourself know what is best for you."

Klytia passed on in silence. Outside the officer looked at her in a kindly manner. "Be of good cheer, young lady," he said. "His Gracious Highness has ordered that you should be taken to your father in the tower, and I think the good Counsellor will himself not remain long there. Our Lord God can permit the ravings of the Italians for a while, but in the end he will not abandon his own." Lydia sobbed. "Only to be with my father, that is all that I wished yesterday." If no other way of coming to him existed than through the Witches' Tower, then her terrible night was none too high a price. She dried her eyes with the determination to be truly grateful and content, and not to mention her terrible experiences, in order not to add to the sorrows of the already overwhelmed man.

At the same moment that Lydia wearied and ill, tottered up the Schlossberg, mostly leaning on the arm of her still weeping servant, Erastus sat in a well-secured room in the Great Tower and gazed out through his barred window at the ruins of the old Castle, now gleaming in the golden rays of the evening sun. There the Count Palatines had been wont to hurl down the eastern or western slopes of the Jettenbühl their spiritual or mundane enemies. They had ever boasted that they feared neither the curses of the Bishops nor the excommunications of the Popes. Now they lived in the proud Castle lower down, but the enemy had crept within the fort itself, secret Jesuits and calvinistic notables sowed the seed of Church dissension and formed the strange combinations which finally must ruin the country. "One side has never recognized religious peace, the other does its best to hinder its blessings within the Palatinate, the end can only be blood and misery? Thou beauteous Palatinate! what Guises and Albas await thee. It seems to me as if I heard the roarings of the cataract which hurries our little bark to its destruction, whilst the crew quarrel among themselves." Such were the thoughts thronging through

the imprisoned statesman's head, as he looked out over the tops of the chestnut trees at the old Waldburg, the former cradle of the Counts Palatine. His hand played in the meantime with a bundle of papers, whose official character was marked out by the blue and white tape of the Chancellory of the Palatinate. Eventually he opened and read them. An ironical smile played over his lips. "General of the Arians and Commander-in-chief of the Devil's hosts, I am advancing in my career of Antichrist;" and he seized a pen as if to write an answer to this bill of indictment; but rage suddenly overmastered him, he flung pen and papers aside. What was the use of answering people who were determined to destroy him, and made use of forged letters to that end? The former friendship of the Kurfürst would protect him from the rack and ill-treatment, of that he might be certain. His enemies would be well satisfied by getting rid of him. Banishment would be his fate, he thought. To create attention by heavy punishments and severe laws was against the interests of the Church council owing to the weak condition of Calvinism in Germany, and the physician to whom the whole world was open felt reconciled at

beginning his travels anew. With a feeling of mingled contempt and disgust he threw down the papers after throwing a cursory glance over them. He, the faithful Zwingliite, to be accused of having founded a conspiracy to make the Pfalz unitarian, or as the Gentlemen of the Church Council chose to express it, mahommedan. "Because all the heads of the Unitarians, Servetus, Blandrata, Socinus, were physicians, naturally the physician Erastus must be one also," he laughed mockingly to himself. "Parsons' logic of the Hogstraten School! Be contented with my head, but the satisfaction of praying for mercy, will I never grant to either Olevianus or Ursinus. . . They wished to extract on the rack from the weakminded fugitives, an account of my opinions," he added shaking his head, "thus are they all these lowly men of God."

As far as he himself was concerned the matter was at an end, but anxiety for Lydia weighed heavily upon him. How could his child, the darling of his heart, have been drawn into all these horrors? Through what devilish arts could the Jesuit have succeeded in enticing the modest child to the cross-roads at a late hour of the evening? This childishly heedless action might

have the most severe consequences for his child should the witches name her as one of their number, and what a satisfaction it would be for the members of the Church Council to apply Church discipline on Erastus' daughter and place her before the entire congregation on the penitent sinner's stool. Perhaps that might not be enough. What if the old Sibylla, whom he had often harshly rebuked for dabbling in medicine, revenged herself on him, by likewise accusing Lydia of sorcery. He did not dare carry on such a train of thought. Such an accusation was a double danger to such a beautiful girl as Lydia. This was the cause why sleep fled from the prisoner, why he restlessly paced up and down his room from morning till evening, why he had petitioned the Kurfürst through the jailer of the prison to suffer him to have an interview with his daughter. As sadly watching the sun setting behind the empurpled mountains near Worms, he was aroused out of his sad reveries by a noise in the corridor. A key turned, the door was opened, and the jailer appeared with his servant, to make ready another bed in the room. "What means this," said Erastus astonished.

"Another prisoner is to be brought here," replied the attendant surlily.

"I am to be spied upon by night and by day," thought Erastus. "Herr Hartmann may remain tranquil on that score, I am not in the habit of talking in my sleep. But Heaven only knows what witnesses they may be instructing in this wise against me. Forged letters do not seem satisfactory. It would be more comfortable for these gentlemen, if I confessed mahommedanism by word of mouth. Let it be—even in the account of the Passion it is said 'and they brought false witnesses against Him, but not even so did their witness agree together.'"

Again steps approached. His fellow prisoner was being brought in. Erastus turned to the window. His intention was not to exchange a word with the man who was placed as a spy upon him; thereby it would be all the harder for the members of the Council to twist his opinions, if he had not wasted a single word on their spy.

"Here," said the jailer to the new-comer, and the door was shut to heavily. Immediately Erastus felt himself embraced by delicate female arms. "Father, dear father," he heard as if

an angel's voice murmured in his ear. He turned around and Lydia nestled to his heart. In his joy he raised his arms as if to enfold her to himself; but stepped backwards.

"What took thee to the Holtermann?" he asked in a stern voice. She looked up into his face with an honest gaze.

"Father I did not wish any evil, or do any evil. I let myself be enticed thither by the message of the Italian clergyman, which thou hast already heard about, but found nobody there but the herb picking woman, and because I disturbed her in her witch's work, she turned three wretches loose on me, who hunted me down, so that I fell into the Heidenloch. Father Werner found me there, he brought me in spite of a broken foot home again, the good true man!"

Never before in his whole lifetime had the pure clear eyes of his daughter been such a comfort to him as at that present moment. Words were not necessary, it was plainly legible in this childish look that Lydia had no conception of the wickedness which she was otherwise said to have committed. Consoled he drew her to his heart.

"The Kurfürst has then permitted thee to keep me company, my poor scared bird," said Erastus tenderly stroking the maiden's fair hair. "How pale and ill thou dost look after all thy fright."

Lydia did not contradict her father. If he only would believe that she was there to keep him company. But Erastus was horrified, as he noticed after a closer look at his only treasure, the feverishly red cheeks of his child and counted her rapidly beating and tremulous pulse. "Lie down Lydia, thou requirest rest," he said gravely, "an illness seems to be coming on." The poor child obeyed. But however carefully the physician avoided disturbing her, sleep would not come to her. Finally she determined, as her father must in course of time learn what took place, to relieve her heart. Mute and cold did the bowed down father listen to the account given by his weeping maiden.

"They are learned in the old dispensation," he said to himself, "they root out their enemies with their entire seed." Then he stooped over Lydia and kissed her pure forehead. "That thou art here my child," he said gently to her, "proves the

Kurfürst's favour. Should wickedness however obtain the mastery, we shall die united."

Lydia tenderly wound her arms round his neck and after having heartily kissed her father she fell into a deep sound sleep, whilst the physician moved to his heart's core lay still on his couch, thinking to whom he might apply, to remove his child out of the reach of that dreadful man. "If however there is no escape, she must from the outset at the first examination declare herself guilty," Erastus concluded in silence, "thus she will escape at least the disgrace and torture of the rack. God of Justice, forgive us this negation of the truth. We are too weak, to withstand this temptation . . . I acknowledge thy handiwork," he added in deep grief. "Thou wouldest free me from my error by bitter means." Thus spake the prisoner full of repentance, for he had himself in a firm belief in allegiance to the devil, and witchcraft, written a book on the Influences of Demons, and sanctioned the violence of the authorities, alas that he could not recall it. "Let it be to thee, as thou hast said." And the strong man pressed his face to his pillow and wept bitterly.

After a while he fancied he heard hammering

and the sound of a chisel on the outside wall. For a time all was still and then it began anew. He rose quietly so as not to wake Lydia and stepped up to the window. He was right, it was no deception, the knocking began again and this time seemed much closer. But the wall was too thick, he could only have looked out by creeping over to the ledge of the window. His heart beat with expectation. He had friends after all who worked to set him free. After a time it seemed to him as if he heard whispering near his window. But the whispering ceased on his opening the casement. Still he heard the breaking away of small stones from the wall, and could plainly distinguish two voices below; then all was again quiet and his attentive ear only heard the nightwind howling round the thick Tower, and the knotty branches of the old chestnuts as they creaked and groaned. Shivering the disappointed prisoner returned to his bed, utterly uncertain whether he would dare venture on an attempt at flight, if on the morrow an occasion presented itself. On his own account he would never have done so, but on account of the danger to which his child was exposed, he would have willingly exposed himself to the calumny of

his enemies, in case Lydia could only escape the widely extended jaws of the horrible monster who had already seized her with his claws. He listened for a long time on his couch, as sleep had forsaken him, to hear whether the knocking were renewed, but he heard nothing but the sighing of the wind as it died away. At every blast the valley re-echoed the deep and melancholy moan, with which the old trees answered the wind, and then the howling of the storm sank into a low wail, as the human heart consorts its own grief with outer nature, so did these sounds resemble to the prisoner in the Tower the agonized screams of some poor wretch undergoing the torture, from whom the first torments call forth wild shrieks, but who in the end is only able to moan in a low tone. The night had already given way to the pale light of the approaching day, as finally a heavy sleep took pity on the sorely tried father.

CHAPTER X.

ERASTUS had heard right. The knocking, boring and hammering betokened an attempt at a rescue. In spite of all Frau Belier's remonstrances Felix had insisted that he must at least provide Erastus with the chance of escaping. Even if the Counsellor declined his proposition, he would have shown Klytia that he was a true friend even in the hour of need, and the consolation which the poor girl might derive from that was worthy of any danger or exertion on his part. This last argument had forced from the brave little Frenchwoman a certain amount of approval, though she refused to aid in any undertaking which might as easily damage as advantage Erastus. But in order to get rid of him, she declared to Felix that if he should bring the fugitives to their house, her chivalrous husband would never refuse to shelter them. The father and daughter could then avail

themselves of the transport of merchandise forwarded by the rich merchant and easily reach the Rhine, and from thence proceed to either Bâle or Holland as might seem fit to Erastus. The next thing for Felix to do was to find out in which of the dungeons of the Tower Erastus was imprisoned. With an air of simulated indifference although this was not his usual custom at that time of the evening he ascended the scaffolding, which already reached half the height, and leaning against one of the windows of the young Countess' apartments, he examined closely the Tower opposite. The windows with curtains might be those of Erastus, in case the physician had been treated according to his deserts. But above those he saw a man's figure leaning close to the cross-bars; could that be the Counsellor? Besides who could vouch for the fact of his having been placed on that side? Moreover it was too dark to distinguish any one plainly. Nothing was left for him but to boldly ask which was Erastus' cell, though he could not do so, without exciting suspicion against himself. As Felix was preparing to descend, a gentleman stepped forward from the back part of the room to the window, and said as if he had been watching

him for some time: "Yes, my dear friend, I also mourn the fate of the man, who has ever been so faithful a friend to the Italians, and quite conceive your anxiety about the innocent Lydia."

"Oh! in that case the Madonna sends you to my aid," answered the artist, "Pray, noble Sir, which is Erastus' room?"

Pigavetta's pale face appeared at the window and as his sharp teeth approached the artist's ear, he resembled more than ever a beast of prey. "You wish to rescue her?" he whispered.

"I only wish to know in which room the father of my affianced bride is confined?"

"Quite right, I forgot that Lydia was yours, the poor child." He naturally wishes to free them both, he thought, which accounts for his stealing round the Witches' Tower the whole afternoon. The artist passionately assured him of his utter conviction of Lydia's innocence. "Who indeed could believe her to be guilty?" said Pigavetta in an absent manner. "It would be well for me to make use of this favorable opportunity," thought

the old Jesuit to himself. "No particular importance is set on the punishment of the old scoundrel, and he must always be an unpleasant witness. Should the old sinner escape then everything is just as it should be. Listen to me, my young friend," he said in a cordial tone, "we are countrymen, let us not beat about the bush. Erastus' life is for me a matter in which I am at heart interested, for I owe him much, and I have wept this very day bitter tears over his child's fate. Confide in me, I will save them, do you also wish this?"

"*Sanguinaccio di Dio*, whether I wish it?" answered Felix excitedly.

"Good, my friend. Erastus' cell is yonder where you see a light. It is the same in which Sylvanus sat before being transported to Mannheim, where the intermittent fever is killing the poor man. How ~~you~~ you are to reach that window is your own affair. It will be my business to see that the sentries sleep well to-morrow night. You must hurry about it, as sentence will be pronounced on Erastus in a few days."

Felix wished to thank Pigavetta, but he had already hurried off to an adjoining room, and the

sound of loud voices approaching likewise caused Felix to retire. Now that he knew whereabouts Erastus was confined, the rest did not trouble him much. All the plans of the castle were in his hands, and he had but to fashion for himself an easy path through garret and loft to the high gables which immediately adjoined the window pointed out by Pigavetta. Since his wild excitement had been allayed, the Italian was again the cool determined architect who calculated every impediment. It was of immediate importance to obtain possession of the keys to the secret passage, which led from the western wall down into the town. Well acquainted with the porter's habits, he took the keys away, whilst the good man was devouring his supper, from the board on which they hung, and placed the man's heavy cloth cap on the vacant space. Part of that night and of the following morning he employed in rendering his rope ladder more manageable and stronger, so that Lydia should not in the end become the victim of his attempted rescue. When the midday hour had summoned the inhabitants of the castle from their work, he furnished himself with a strong wire and a few instruments. Then he quietly ascended the

steps of the Ruprechtsbau, till he came to a garret-door. He shaped the wire into a hook, and thus opened the door. Nobody was to be found up here under the garret roof which glowed through the heat of the noon sun. A dim bluish light prevailed in the spacious room and the atoms danced in the beams, which forced their way straight through the cracks, like a host of stars. The artist crossed the dark garret till he came to a staircase, which led through an opening in the roof to a larger loft. He knew that he was now above that part of the Burg whose gable adjoined the Tower, and led through the narrow staircase to the secret passage. A plain door showed where this staircase began. It was tightly shut, but the architect took a chisel out of his pocket and quietly loosened all the screws. In the course of half an hour the work was completed, and after taking the door off its hinges, he ascended a small wooden staircase which led him to a room with thick walls and small barred windows. The iron rings in the walls showed him that he was now in one of the secret prisons. A niche with an iron chain which passed over a wheel told him of private executions in this still room, from whence no

sound could penetrate into the Courtyard beneath. "Thou mightest also be placed on this bench," thought Felix, "and the chain adjusted to thy neck, and then the wheel twirled and the iron noose tightened and the victim strangled." He shuddered. How many state prisoners like Erasmus may have perhaps breathed in the dread silence their last sigh? Another staircase led him past similar cells. The artist only cast a hurried look into them, and saw to his comfort how none but large rats tumbled about to their satisfaction in the uninhabited rooms. He next came to a heavy iron door whose lock he was unable to pick. Even the rusty screws resisted his attempts. Nothing was left for him to do but to retrace the whole way to his room and provide himself with oil and stronger instruments. Then only was he able to unhinge the door. It led to a strong stone winding staircase, at the head of which was a lantern with a tallow candle. The artist lighted this and descended about three hundred steps. He had with him the key of the heavy lock of the lowest door. He opened it and found himself in a long dark passage, which finally led to a small court near to the wall of the Zwinger. He gently opened

this small secret door which separated the court from the street, and then remeasured his steps, leaving the whole of the doors behind him almost closed. Once arrived in the upper gable rooms, he considered, how he could make an easy passage from Erastus' window to the opposite gable end? The safest means to preserve Lydia from any danger appeared to the artist to be, to make a ladder, and then to break a sufficiently large hole in the gable of the roof. His rope ladder must aid in getting from the window of the tower to this opening. After concealing his instruments among the rafters, he turned back to the various garrets thinking to himself how it might be possible to bring thither a tall ladder in the day time? He had now reached the upper floor of the Ruprechtsbau, assigned as rooms to the servants, when he was startled by a voice. An old housekeeper stood before him, on whose angry features he could plainly read the question, what did the Italian gentleman require up here. Felix smiled on her as pleasantly as he could, made her a sign to keep silent and then quietly descended the stairs. The woman looked viciously after him: "He also has learnt that red-headed Frances receives visits. But this

very week shall this too amorous wench quit my service," and she went into her room, banging the door after her. After this adventure Felix thought it advisable not to let himself be seen again before the night time. Only when all slept did he repair to the gable rooms, and after having scientifically removed four rows of tiles and smoothed the rafters with his planes, he placed with great trouble but in a thoroughly secure position a ladder, by means of which the poor child could ascend and descend through the opened windows. After he had made for himself a safe position on the roof by removing more tiles, he noiselessly bored holes in the round wall of the tower and inserted hooks to enable him to reach the window which lay some twelve feet above his head. The insertion of the upper iron, which he was obliged to accomplish standing on his rope ladder was not without danger. The wind came howling and whistling round the tower and hindered his work though at the same time it drowned the noise of the hammering. He managed to insert the last hook and the rest was easy work, for he could now fasten the end of his rope to the bars of the window and did not require to entrust Lydia's precious life to the insecure iron,

up which he himself had climbed. After he had knotted the rope, he passed his arms around the bars and trembling with excitement tapped at Erastus' window with his wearied hand. He was about to tap a second time when the window was opened from within. "Is it you, Erastus?" asked Felix in a low tone. "Yes," was the answer spoken equally low. "Is Lydia with you?"

"She sleeps."

"Take these steel saws and this bottle of corrosive acid, and cut through the bars on this side. But not here, as here hangs my ladder. The opening thus made will be large enough to let you and Lydia pass through."

Saws and bottle quickly disappeared within the room. "In the mean time I shall go down, in order to loosen the end of the ladder, so that you can draw it up higher and fasten it tighter. But by the eyes of the Madonna be careful, one false step precipitates you into the yard below. Only awake Lydia when you are ready, it is not necessary to protract the exciting moments for her."

Even whilst descending Felix heard a strong

hand beginning to cut through the iron. He therefore hurried back to the garret, measured carefully the whole of the way over which he must lead father and daughter; and moreover lit some lights which he had brought with him to show the path more distinctly. Then he returned to the gable from whence he could hear Erastus working away untiringly, whilst the iron splinters rattled around his own head. The work was now at an end, the bar sawn through wrenched up with a powerful effort and placed within the room. The ladder was now drawn up. Felix saw two strong hands fastening it tightly. "He is surely certain to send Lydia down first," thought the excited artist, "so as to be able to help her from above." A dark figure appeared on the ladder. "Lydia first," called out the excited artist, but the heavy man came down the wall without stopping for a moment, he now stood on the gable and hurried over the steps to the window, Felix helped him in. The lucky fugitive now turned and Felix saw before him the Reverend Neuser's fat, red face. His first inclination was to seize the hated Parson and with one blow to hurl him into the depths beneath.

"*Corpo di Baccho!*" he called out in a rage, "why did you lie to me and tell me you were Erastus?"

"Ah! Signor Italiano," said Neuser puffing, "it is to you I am indebted for my delivery!" and without losing a minute he sprang on to the floor of the garret.

"*Birbante!*" hissed Felix, "*coglione!*"

"My dear Sir," said the Parson calmly, wiping away the perspiration from his brow, "did not your brother at the Hirsch teach me that deception was a virtue, as is everything, which gives man power over his fellow-men? Tell this pious man, that Parson Neuser thanks him much for this useful truism."

Felix gnashed his teeth with rage, but Neuser continued good-naturedly: "How could you suppose, my dear Sir, that I would let myself be beheaded, whilst a little imprisonment does not mean the life of the worthy Counsellor."

"You have acted like a German," said Felix in his rage. "You surrender an innocent maiden to be tried for witchcraft so long as you can save your greasy hide."

"Gently, Signor Italiano," said Neuser calmly, "this small plot would be much too round for my square schwabian skull. Your countryman Pigavetta taught me that."

"Pigavetta!" cried the astonished Felix, "he pointed out your window to me."

"You see, my dear Sir. I had returned at an inconvenient moment for your countryman, as he had found a quantity of letters among the papers of the fugitive clergyman, which the latter knew nothing of. He therefore offered to pay my expenses and a free pass, if I only would disappear." The Parson jingled a few loose thalers in his pockets. "The cunning man wanted a quantity of documentary evidence from me which would fit in with his indictment, but I did not trust him and told him I should send it to him when free. Can you now tell me, I ought to have acted otherwise? But do not look so dejected. Climb through my window. If you can undo the bolt you will find Erastus in the third room to the left. I saw him yesterday through the key-hole. Then you can bring him out by the same way that I came. Now how must I go?"

"To yonder light, then to the right, where

you see other lights," said Felix thoroughly discouraged.

"My best thanks," replied Neuser heartily. "Greet that beloved man of God Olevianus and tell him, that if he lusts after my head, he must write to Constantinople for it. I have had almost too much of Church Councillors and Magistrates, I shall go in for Muphtis and Kadis." Felix next heard him groping along the rafters, and after a time stealing through the secret passage beneath.

"I must follow the Parson's advice," said Felix in a wearied tone. He had to restrain himself otherwise he would have wept through disappointment and grief. "I will endeavor to reach Erastus through Neuser's cell, and break the bolt if necessary." Undaunted the wearied man climbed the walls once again, and pushed himself through the opening made by the sawn bars. "If the prison fare had not made the reverend gentleman much thinner, he never could have come through this way," he involuntarily thought. He felt about in the dark for the door. Finally he found it and examined the locks. But he soon saw that none of his tools were suitable for breaking these strong

bolts asunder. A streak of light behind the Königstuhl announced the approach of day. He rolled up his ladder and descended the wall by means of the hooks he had inserted. Wearied to death, he had nevertheless to retrace his steps through the entire secret passage. He stuck the key on the outside of the lock of the door giving on to the street, so as to make it appear as if aid had been given from outside, the lights he took away, he replaced the doors on their hinges, and after having effaced any suspicious traces he returned to his room utterly wearied. He first carefully concealed the objects he had made use of, in a secret place, and then already more than half asleep hastened to his bed. When he awoke, Bachmann the court servant stood over him anxious to inquire about his wound. Felix willingly let him apply a fresh bandage and remained in bed to enjoy another sleep. Whilst occupied the old man related with ill-concealed joy, that Parson Neuser had in the most wonderful manner escaped from prison. The small door of the secret passage had been found open, and the Keeper had been arrested for having lost the key. Neuser had many friends in the town and it was not astonish-

ing that aid had been given him. But the Kurfürst saw in this a proof, that the Arian conspiracy still existed, and it was reported that in his anger he had ordered the Amtmann for this cause to execute the sentence of death on Sylvanus and his colleagues Vehe and Suter. "May their bones bleach on the gallows," said Felix coldly, as he turned his face to the wall, and calmly continued his slumbers.

CHAPTER XI.

THE day following the adventure which took place in front of the Baptist's house in the Kreuzgrund, Magister Paul strode through the woods as if in a dream, and lost himself among the trees. It was no longer a gloomy conception but the pure naked truth; a just but coarse hand had torn aside the veil from the well guarded secret of his inmost self, and before the very people who looked on him as a saint, he had stood a convicted criminal, a perverter of the young, a juggler who mis-used the Holiest of Holies to indulge his passions. The fettered witch, for whom the stake now waited, appeared to him worthy of envy in comparison to the rôle which he had played, and the outcast woman had herself felt this, so joyously did her eyes sparkle, as she shrieked out his secret to the world at large. The heretical Baptist had treated him as a miserable sinner and he could give him

no reply. Moreover Erastus his benefactor had sunk down before him as if pierced to the heart by the treacherous bullet which he had fired in ambush at the man, who had ever done him kindness. "O my God!" stammered Paul as he stumbled among the bushes and underwood, "that did I not will. Thou art my witness; I wished to injure no one, it was some baneful spell, which hurried her and me to destruction." As if to escape his own thoughts he rushed breathless up the mountain. "A spell," whispered the spirit of self extenuation to him. "Was it a spell?" Might not the witch have kindled in his breast this sinful flame, in which all his good resolutions were ever consumed. As if he had eaten mad-wort had he hastened in blind rage to his own downfall. Or perhaps indeed this beautiful child was herself a creation of Satan, who had staked his honor, to seduce the *primus omnium* of the college at Venice from the right path? Who but Satan had prompted him to make an appointment with Lydia on the most disreputable of the cross-roads, when hundreds of less suspicious places might have been chosen. But how, by all the Saints, did Lydia manage to comply with his bidding? Was she in reality as

well acquainted with the Holtermann, as the witch asserted? "Whence moreover does she get this supernatural beauty?" Oh, now was it clear to him why his heart burnt with those flames. But suddenly he laughed ironically to himself: "And the fool's daughter at the Hirsch was she also a witch? and how about the young girls in the Chapel?" Buried in such thoughts he reached a solitary footpath, and sank down wearily on the stump of a tree. With his head in his hands in a profound melancholy he gazed about him. "I was bewitched," he sighed aloud.

"Every man is tempted, when excited and allured by his own wicked passions," said a grave voice near him. The timid fugitive jumped up terrified; he feared for his own safety. But near him stood the Baptist. The Priest thoroughly cowed gazed at the weather-beaten face of the dread heretic. The latter continued calmly: "Nevertheless when passion has conceived, it begets sin, and the wages of sin, is death."

The young man covered his pale face with his hands and sank down again on his seat, bowing his head before the strange old man.

"I grieve for you, Magister Laurenzano," con-

tinued the Baptist. "I have always looked on you as a brave man, who might do much good in the service of our Lord God with the talents bestowed on him, if he would only throw aside the cowl, which has encircled him, and if he only had the courage to abjure the vows in which he has been ensnared. Bid *valet* to the papists, take a wife, as you have not the strength to live as monk, and live well or ill from the labor of your hands, or the productions of your brain."

Laurenzano shook his head sorrowfully, and a choked sob was his only answer.

"I cannot tarry here longer," said the old man, "and wisdom does not proceed from weeping men. The officers of justice, whom you have brought on me, are now already perhaps at my heels, and my son is waiting for me. But this I will say to you: In case that danger should arise for Erastus' daughter, owing to the charge made by Sibylla, you must surrender yourself and tell the judges, that the poor child was not then seeking Satan, but you, her teacher, her priest, her pastor. If you have not the courage to do this, the Lord will require this soul of you on the day of Judgement. And secondly, we are all flesh and blood and should

therefore not judge one another, but if you remain in that dress, recollect your duties better than you did in the Stift, and when you again appear before the little ones, remember the words: 'Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' And now farewell."

When Paul raised his head he found himself sitting alone in the woods. Had his guardian angel appeared to him in the garb of the heretic, or had power been given to this child of the devil to read his heart and to decipher his innermost thoughts? The evasions in which he had concealed himself, the veil, with which he had wished to cover his shame, the pretexts, with which he would clothe the abomination, had all fallen before the heavy blow of this coarse peasant, he stood there disclosed to himself the miserable sinner, that he was. Nothing more remained to be said or to be excused. He was convicted. He rose up with a sigh, wiped his eyes, so that none should see that he had wept, and hastened in silent sorrow by the side of the lofty oaks and beeches of the high-road which

he now reached. What should he do? Should he again appear among the people who now all knew his shame and would point their fingers at him? Should he escape once more to Speyer and continue in the crypt of the cathedral the *exercitia* which had restored to him his peace of mind for a couple of weeks? Then he found himself near the deep pond at the entry of the place, out of which more than one young creature had been drawn out, who preferred this humid death to sitting on the stool of penitent sinners or to church discipline. "It were better for him that he were drowned," the man had told him in the wood. With fixed look he gazed at the deep dark surface. "It were better for him," he murmured, "better, very much better." He would first let the small girl approaching that way pass by, then he would follow the advice of the Baptist. "New scandals must succeed this one, therefore better is better." ♡

The child whom he had noticed sprang joyfully towards him. "Ah! Reverend Sir," it cried, "how well it is that I find you, mother has a worse attack of fever and has wept and again begged that we should send for the clergyman to pray with her." And the small child seized his hand and dragged

him towards the village. He followed her unwillingly till she led him to a small low house. "Oh Herr Pfarrer," a voice said from a narrow room, "things will now be better." And the tall pale man knelt by the side of the sick woman and began a prayer. "The Lord wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live." His own sorrow did he lay before the Lord. He whispered into the ear of the sick woman as if telling himself, that God's Grace was boundless like the waters of the sea, and that he sustaineth our feet even in the day of trouble when we think we are sinking. When he had finished he felt more inwardly calm and he remained for a while sitting in silence near the afflicted woman. Then he shook himself together in order to fetch the necessary medicine from the monastery, and to visit the other sick, and after that he had spent many hours in heavy self sacrificing labor, the beauteous message of peace was borne to him in the cool breezes of the evening wind whilst the moon rose calm and tranquil above the pine forests, that we do not atone for our sins by a few hours of repentance full of anguish and sleepless nights, but in the real practice of works of charity and care

for the well-being of others, so that the wounds we have healed, are greater in number than those we have caused.

Paul had spent several days in this earnest restless fulfilment of duty, joyless but still more peaceful, when a message from the town awoke once more all the terrors of his conscience. He received a summons through the bailiffs of the place marked down for the first day of the following week, in the which he was requested to testify before the Amtmann in the Chancellory of the Palatinate, as a former friend of Erastus' family, all he knew as regarded the relations of the former Counsellor with Parson Neuser and the other Arians, moreover that he should testify as to the belief and general habits of Lydia daughter of Erastus, who was about to be placed on her trial *in crimine malefacii*. The peace so laboriously acquired left him at once. The brand of Cain burnt once more on his forehead, but he cared little for any insult or disgrace which might accrue to him during these public trials, in comparison with the horrible fear, that he might have been the means of bringing to the most fearful of ends the pure young creature, towards whom he had raised his sinful glance. He knew but too ex-

actly the procedure of the trial with which Lydia was threatened, it haunted his mind at every instant. No sacrifice and self-negation, no earnest prayer in the house of God, nor even in his own closet was able to allay this spectre, and the altered appearance of the parson attracted even the remarks of the plain country people, who up till then had believed stedfastly in him. The report of the affair on the Kreuzgrund spread, and when on the last Sunday of the time allotted for his duties, he addressed as warm a farewell to his congregation as he could in his frame of mind, the feeling of mistrust among his audience was stronger than the recollection of the good which he had done them, and on visiting at mid-day for the last time one or the other, he reaped in many a house chilly thanks and a cold farewell, for the women whispered among themselves, that he had performed his miracles in pact with the Evil One, and that he was going about looking so miserable, because the Devil had appeared to him on the previous night, to demand his soul as the reward stipulated. A feeling of unspeakable bitterness seized him. Had he not watched over these people as their guardian angel, his wisdom had saved them when raging against one another,

his love had kept guard whilst they slept, his self-sacrifice had raised them up when they wearied. And their gratitude consisted in whispering: he is in league with the Evil One. But who indeed had bidden him perform miracles? The means had been efficacious, but with the effectiveness of the first impression he had had his reward. Such were the thoughts that passed through his restless and aching heart, as he tossed that last night sleepless on his bed, and even before break of day he arose, and without any companion began his wearied way towards Heidelberg. He found himself deceived in thinking that he would be able to get over the distance in silent solitude. Groups of country people passed him in the wood; they were all pressing towards the town. Some sight was evidently to be seen there, for the peasants were hurrying as if to pass one another, and from their conversation Laurenzano made out that they were disputing among themselves, from what place one could best look on at the proceedings so well worth seeing. An uncertain fear overwhelmed him, they might be alluding to Lydia's execution. Tortured by evil presentiments he likewise hastened his pace, and yet he dared not ask any of the numerous excursionists,

what was taking place in Heidelberg, for he feared that they would laugh in his face and answer: "Who should know that better than thou, devilish Priest?" Then he became aware that a tall figure dressed in black was dogging his footsteps and remained close to him. Did he walk fast so did the stranger likewise, did he slow his pace his pursuer broke into a slower step. Paul looked back several times at the stranger who followed him and beheld a man of military bearing dressed in black velvet, wearing a black biretta and a full black beard. Was this an emissary of Pigavetta, or had the magistrate sent this soldier after him to watch that he did not escape? The thought aroused his pride, he raised his head on high and proceeded with measured tread towards Heidelberg whose towers already loomed before him from the bend of the road. On arriving at the road by the river, Laurenzano noticed that the crowd of country people increased, and as his pursuer did not let him out of his sight, his annoyance over-mastered him, and stopping he asked the stranger in as indifferent a voice as he could assume: "Is the witch to be burnt in the town to-day, that the people thus flock thither?" A look from under the bushy black brows

of the soldier, familiar and yet not recognized by him, met his own, as the latter answered with scorn: "You must have a good conscience, young man, that you carry your head higher than most people dare do. I am glad of it. As regards the witch, she is to-day to be racked and to-morrow burnt; to-day only a heretic is to be executed, the Inspector Sylvanus, who has blasphemed against God and Christ but you turn pale, young man, is anything the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing," stammered Paul, "it will pass over."

"Well, there are some sorrows which do not pass over, a worm which dieth not, and a fire which is not quenched. The clergyman at Ladenburg was a bold sinner and a weak man, but nevertheless I would rather exchange with him than with the man who delivered him up to the scaffold and forestalled the Judge, before giving the man an opportunity for repentance or conversion. What think you?"

Paul walked as in a dream; the ground seemed to roll and undulate under his feet, as if he were treading on clouds, he saw the Stift on the left and the Schloss on his right dancing before him,

there was a murmuring, buzzing and singing in his ears, as if he were in the depths of the sea. "I know not," he whispered, as an eagle glance from his companion imperiously seemed to demand an answer.

"You know not, in that case I can aid you," replied the stranger. "The man who is to be executed to-day, laid bare his thoughts to some boon companions in a tavern and in their intoxication they said things which they did not mean. Near them however sat a disguised Jesuit, who had listened to them, and reported to the Kurfürst, so as to find favor in the eyes of the Sovereign. The Counsellor Erastus, who had had nothing to do with these offences, they managed to involve by means of a forged letter introduced among Neuser's papers, which he had never written. Thus half a dozen men with their wives and children have been hurried to destruction. What think you of the spy?"

"He will repent," stammered Paul.

"Repent," answered the other. "To make amends is the only repentance. But the traitor seems far from doing this for he carries his head high, and yet has another burden to bear, com-

pared to which his betrayal of the clergy is but child's play. Did anything of this sort ever happen to your knowledge, young man?" and again a withering glance was cast at the young Priest who tottered at his side as if in a dream. "The Jesuit whom you know not, played the part of a protestant clergyman; he stole away the heart of a young inexperienced child, and enticed her to meet him at night on a cross-road. She was seized in this disreputable place, set down for a witch, and now awaits torture and death. He, the wretch, however instead of obtaining an audience from the Prince and saying, 'the child is innocent, I am the traitor, I enticed her thither, not the devil, I only am Satan, torture me, burn me'—instead of doing what conscience and honor required, goes about with uplifted head, and merely asks the first-comer, with an indifferent look: is the witch to be burnt to-day?"

Paul reeled like one drunk. "I will indeed, I was on my way" . . . he stuttered.

"You will, you are on your way," rejoined the other, "then is the case altered. No one would think so who heard your inquiry; but I forgot, that from your earliest youth you have been taught, how

one should go about dissembling. I thought you might be on the road to Speyer as formerly." Paul looked up terrified at the stranger.

"Who are you, who know everything?" he asked as a shudder of superstition passed over him.

"I will prove to you, that I believe in your resolutions to lead a better life. Perhaps your determination will be steeled by the confidence I repose in you." The biretta was removed, the black beard was held in the hand, the Baptist Werner stood before Laurenzano, in whose eyes stood tears.

"Do not weep, young friend," said the old man in a milder tone. "To do what is demanded of you, requires you to become hard as iron. And to prove to you that I only encourage you to do what I am ready myself to perform, call on me, should my testimony be of any use to the poor girl. You have only to send the watch word to old Else on the haymarket: 'He who testifies in water requires him,' she will send for me and I will come, even should my head be endangered." Paul reached out his hand to this singular man. "Pardon me that I attacked you so harshly, Sir, but your ques-

tion cut me to the quick. Now I know, that you will not sacrifice Lydia."

"You also have I driven from house and home," stammered Laurenzano.

"Do not let that distress you. Whosoever is homeless finds a home everywhere, and the harder it rains the sooner it leaves off. For the present I am going to the brethren across the Rhine, but think that by the time the grapes are ripe, I shall be once more within my own walls." Paul warmly pressed the horny hand of the old man, who pointed to the bridge, whilst he himself continued the road along the side of the river.

Paul had scarcely crossed the bridge-gate, when a bell began to toll from the tower of the Heiligengeist. It had a curious dull sound as if cracked, and yet could be heard at a great distance; it did not announce God's greeting of peace in mild accents, but rather cut through to the heart like a knife, and the young Priest covered his ears with his hands, so as not to hear it, for he recognized the knell of criminals, announcing Sylvanus' last pilgrimage on this earth. Then he composed himself and deadly pale strode on towards the marketplace, which he had to pass to reach the

Castle, before the proceedings against Lydia began. But once at the marketplace it was no use thinking of further progress. Endeavouring to force his way Paul found himself in the midst of the throng, and was pushed on forward nearer and nearer to the block between the Church and the town-hall; there the peasantry of the surrounding villages had been massed under the guidance of their clergymen, and a company of infantry kept the ground; he could no longer retrace his steps, there was no escape. He must look on at the horrible spectacle, of which he himself was the prime mover. The deafening noise of drums and the shrill notes of the fife, announced the arrival of the criminal. "Is that long haggard figure in penitent's dress who stands next to the stout Parson, the handsome man, the jovial inspector of Ladenburg, and by all the saints, why is that child, that nine-year old boy there?" The persons between whom Paul stood wedged looked in astonishment at the rapidly speaking Priest who raised his arms in despair towards the scaffold, as if he would render aid.

"Well Sir," answered one of the townspeople. "Nothing will be done to the boy, but as he was permitted to keep company with his heretic father

to the last, the members of the Council have ordered, that he shall attend the execution so as to see, to where false doctrine leads, in case he should be secretly inoculated with it." Paul would have returned an answer, but the band played a sacred tune and the congregations led by their clergy began the hymn: "Now pray we to the Holy Ghost to grant us true belief." Then the loud tones of the clergyman were heard, beseeching God, to maintain his congregations in the veritable doctrine. "Your veritable doctrine," hissed the Italian. Moreover the spiritual gentleman testified to the fact that Sylvanus repented his blasphemies and died as a good Christian, to avenge with his blood the honor of God, which he, tempted by Satan, had trodden under foot. It was to be hoped that God would forgive him his sins, and as he had already here below atoned in the flesh, that his soul would be saved on the Day of Judgment.

"Judge not, judge not," murmured Laurenzano talking to himself like one possessed.

He next saw Sylvanus led forward to acknowledge before all the people his repentance, but the once so powerful speaker spoke to-day in a weak

intelligible voice; then he kissed his boy who clung despairingly to him. The clergyman now pulled the child towards him, the executioner forced Sylvanus down on the block—Paul shut his eyes. He could no longer witness the horrible spectacle. "I have robbed this child of its father," he cried aloud, "I have slain this child." A cry from the crowd, a murmur among the thousands announced that the blow had fallen. When Laurenzano looked up, he saw only the fainting child being carried from the scaffold. At the same moment the band burst out anew. "Thou blessed light shine down," sang the peasants lustily. Laurenzano remained in sheer despair. "Thou, thou alone art guilty of this," resounded in his ears. "Cain, Cain," echoed the tiles on the roofs. He scarcely noticed, how the ranks around him broke up. Without knowing it, he stood alone before the block which was being cleansed of the blood, in the midst of a group of the most villainous and blood-thirsty ruffians. A feeling of dumb despondency deprived his limbs of their use. Crime had heaped itself mountain high over his head, whilst he had only thought to serve God. Who had spilt this blood, which the executioner was washing away? Who had

driven Erastus to jail? Who had hurried Klytia to the witches' tower? He and he alone. Wherever he might turn, this Medusa grinned at him. To whatever he listened, he heard only of the misery which he had caused. The whole town spake of nothing but of himself and of his dues. Alas, why had he not had the courage that day to drown himself at Schönauf.—He again heard the knell of the bell of the penitent sinners tolling in his ear, the words of the Baptist came thronging uppermost to his mind . . . now, in the Hirsch yonder they are playing the beautiful Gabrielle. "Down, down to the Neckar, there is peace," he cried to himself. But the shout of a drunken lout that reached his ear roused him like a clap of thunder out of his gloomy brooding.

"Come, Maier, let us go and hear the witch sing out."

"What next," replied the other, a red-haired repulsive looking ruffian, "that's not worth the trouble."

"Yes indeed it's fine when they laugh and squeal through agony."

The young Priest shook himself together, he

cast a wild despairing look towards heaven, then he followed the hard-hearted youth, who quickly chose the shortest path leading to the witches' tower. A small alley led up to the old town wall, the so-called Zwinger, in which behind the Augustine monastery rose high the Witches' Tower. In front of this Paul saw various groups of people assembled who were gazing up at a window in the Tower. A shriek like that of some wild beast was heard followed by a piteous whimpering. "O, can the angelic child have come to this, to this," Paul's conscience spake in despairing tones.

"Hear how she sings," Maier said coarsely joking, and his companions laughed; the rough blackguards felt themselves suddenly pushed and jostled aside by a furious thrust, a tall man dressed in black rushes up the steps of the Tower, and shoves past the guards placed at the door with the strength of a madman. He presses forwards guided by the dolorous cry which pealed down from above. He has reached the door. All is now deadly still. He knocks—no answer,—he shakes the lock with violence. "Immediately, immediately," says a coarse voice from within. Finally the door is opened. Paul made out in the semi-dark room

the half-naked figure of the executioner and his assistants. "She is innocent, I will testify in her favor, where are the judges?" stammered the breathless young man.

"Then you come too late, the Devil has just taken the witch to himself," answered Master Ulrich with a coarse laugh, and pushing the shutters open Paul was enabled to see stretched on the bench of torture a shrivelled brown corpse. The executioner roughly seized the head and turned the face towards him, Paul recognized the pale contracted features of the herb picker on the cross-roads.

"Where is Lydia?" he stammered.

"She sits in the Castle near her father," said the executioner grinning. "She was too fine a tit-bit for us. The members of the commission on witchcraft are now at lunch. It is paid for out of the witches' money. If you think of testifying in favor of that bread and butter miss, wait an hour or two and then lay your deposition before them."

At that moment the door opened and Pigavetta walked in. He looked in astonishment at Laurenzano. "You here, Magister," he said with

quick composure. "I waited for you in the Castle. So much the better," and then he whispered approaching close to him: "I will tell you in a few words what you have to say, and if necessary swear to."

"Get thee behind me, Satan," cried Paul aiming a violent blow at the traitor's breast. But the active Italian moved to one side, and Paul himself tumbled up against the wall.

"Are matters thus!" muttered Pigavetta. "Master Ulrich, place this man at once in the press and take care, that no one gains admittance to him."

"What, traitor!" cried out Paul, madly rushing at Pigavetta. But at that instant he felt himself seized from behind, Pigavetta himself closing his mouth with his hand. He was pulled across a beam, his feet thrust into two slits and imprisoned by another beam, which fell across. Then his arms were pressed down in a similar beam, which likewise closed of itself. "Good, now gaze at the witch there," said Pigavetta with a cold intonation, "and the various agreeable instruments round about here and consider what the consequences of your witchcraft and jugglery at Schönau will be,

if you do not become more reasonable." Then he coldly turned his back on him. The executioner closed the blinds of the witches' prison and left Paul alone with the body of the old woman.

CHAPTER XII

PAUL lay in the still dark torture-chamber in a senseless stupor. In spite of his uncomfortable position his wearied head sank on the beam blackened with age and stained with blood, and he remained in an almost half sleeping half fainting state. His ear however heard the song of the heavenly hosts, and his soul was filled with joy at suffering and atoning for the many wrongs which he had caused. By degrees his fantastic thoughts assumed a more distinctive connection and he determined to avail himself of any examination, either before the judges or on the rack, to aid in the liberation of Erastus and of his daughter. It was good for him to be here. He must now be heard. To cause him to disappear without leaving traces, was even beyond Pigavetta's power. The most terrible tortures would be the most welcome, if he could but say to himself afterwards: "Thou hast atoned, thou art forgiven."

His fantastic stupor was about to change into a veritable slumber, when he was startled by a long drawn sigh proceeding from the rack. He looked up and saw the wearied eyes of old Sibylla fixed on him.

"You are not dead yet, Mother," he said gently and kindly to the witch.

"So in reality it is you," replied the old woman in a husky tone. "They have tortured me so severely that I thought I was out of my senses, and saw only what I wished. For I wished to see you, wished cursingly to see you, and now I am too weary, too weak to rejoice thereat. Ah!" and again a deep sigh re-echoed through the gloomy silent chamber.

"Why did you so desire to see me?" asked Paul.

Again the witch fixed him with her glassy dead eyes. Then choked the words out. "Did you not lead them; who bade you cut off an old woman's escape?"

"Why did you sell yourself to the Devil?"

"There is no Devil," said the old woman indifferently.

"No Devil?" cried out the priest. "You ought

best to know that one exists, you who have so often attended the fearful revels on the Kreuzweg."

"For thirty years have I sat on the Holtermann and by the Linsenteich, and crept at midnight into the Jettenhöhle, and have muttered all the incantations taught me by my parents, but all remained still. Lately I thought to see him, but it was only the miller's boy at his tricks."

"And you never went out there, to drink and to dance with the fiends, and to whore with the Devil?"

"If I could do that would I be lying here?" said the old witch in a tone of contempt. "I spake all the curses that are known. 'Here I stand on the dung and deny Jesus Christ.' I sang his own song: 'Come, Come, Satan, jump here, jump there, hop here, hop there, play here, play there,' or 'Come out, come on, touch nowhere on, Hie up and out.' But none availed. I have prayed to the Devil, and enticed the elves, but nothing moved; it is all nonsense."

"Why did you not rather pray to God?"

"There is no God," said the old woman in the same apathetic tone.

"You blaspheme," said Paul angrily.

"You will soon see, when they stretch the fair Lydia out here, and scourge her with ropes, and burn her with sulphur, whether He helps. And Erastus, and Xylander, and the daughter of Pithopöus, and Probus' wife, and Probus himself."

"What! have you named them all?"

"They are as guilty as I am. At first I remained silent and would not answer, but they held my nose closed, so that I had to open my mouth to breathe. Then they shoved an iron pear with a spring into my mouth, which distended my jaws. I thought I should choke to death. One learns to speak then."

"But what made you mention those names?"

"Well the gentlemen kept asking me questions one after the other, and I thought they would torture me less if I said yes. I heard the Italian with the yellow face say: 'notorious heretics may always be presumed to be magicians,' and then they said 'Probus' yes, no, 'Xylander,' 'Pithopöus,' no, not he, 'Erastus' and thus I snapped up the names. It hurts to hang thus, and they kept putting on heavier weights to my legs. You will find out how

it hurts when they wrench the joints out of their sockets. At length I noticed that they kept on as long as I gave any answer, so at last I was silent and kept my eyes fixed on the parson with the greenish hue. That was too much for him, so he left. But the Italian was the worst, he ordered me to be stretched out here and sulphur threads to be placed under my arms and round my fingers and then to be lit, till I confessed that Erastus had also danced on the Holtermann and sprung over the he-goat Devil. Then they went on with the torture of blows till I pretended to die. Old women are tough. We have little blood and require little, therefore it lasted longer. My grandmother was tortured for thirteen days." 'The old woman's speech became more and more indistinct. It seemed as if she were talking to herself, her narration became so jerky, at one time unintelligible, at another scarcely audible. She kept murmuring about her experiences, how often she had sought after the Devil and never found him, sometimes chuckling and grinning to herself. Then she said as if in excuse, that people only required the magic wares, which were prepared at the right time and at the right place. She would not cheat her customers. If they paid a

good price it was her duty to give them the veritable article, otherwise anybody would be selling their trash. Her talk became more and more confused and jumbled. Paul could not tell whether she had become insane, or was in possession of her senses. He shuddered. Then her murmurs changed into a rattle, her broken body was shaken with severe quiverings, one more shiver and then it was over. The herb picker of the Kreuzgrund was this time in reality a corpse.

For many hours Paul sat on the block alone, his limbs began to swell up. A violent pain in his head and an unendurable thirst tortured him, but he laid his head on the beam sticky with the sweat and blood of his numerous predecessors of both sexes, and repined not. Towards evening he was startled from his fainting condition by the creaking of the door. As he looked up, Pigavetta stood before him.

"Magister," said the Italian, "I hope you have thought over the foolish way you acted this morning. Let this disagreeable day replace the *exercitia* which I should have had to impose on you for a few weeks, and let us calmly discuss how to get you out of this dangerous situation."

Paul remained silent, and did not raise his head from the block.

"You are to be tried to-morrow before the Commission," continued Pigavetta. "I will spare you the necessity of appearing as Erastus' prosecutor, as you seem to be in a secretive mood. You must however testify, with as far as I am concerned the necessary mental reservation, if that quiets your conscience, that Erastus has often spoken to you in private as if he were tainted with Unitarianism, has denied the Holy Trinity, and praised the works of Servetus and Blandrata. You know as well as I do that he is in reality a heretic, deserving therefore of any punishment. As to your silly assignation with his daughter you have only to say, that you wished to prove to your satisfaction, whether she in reality did go at suspicious hours to the Kreuzweg, as had been reported to you. It is lucky that your presence at Speyer on that very evening can be proved. The Rector will testify that you were with him at ten o'clock. Do you consent? Answer!"

"Erastus has never stated to me that he was an Arian," answered the prisoner shortly.

"That is a matter of indifference," said Pigavetta impatiently. "You know how many Doctors

of our order permit the probable to be sworn to as the veritable, if by so doing the greater evil can be avoided, of permitting a culprit to escape unpunished, and to continue raging against the Church."

"I know that it is written: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,'" replied Paul in a quiet voice.

"Childishness," cried Pigavetta angrily. "I charge you *in obedientia majoris*, to testify to this statement. You have nothing to do with the responsibility, I take that on myself."

"The pangs of conscience which I have suffered, have not been borne for me by any superior;" said Paul in a tone of mild reproof. "I have felt, that if a man carries hell in his own heart, all the blessings of the Church cannot bring back his peace of mind. I cannot live with a threefold or tenfold murder on my conscience. No Priest's absolution would drive away the shades of Erastus or Lydia from my couch."

"You are in love," rejoined Pigavetta mockingly.

Paul kept silence.

"In that case I can help you," continued

Pigavetta in an easy tone. "I shall cause Lydia to be brought here, then you can have it all your own way. Witches' trials often last for years, and here you have plenty of elbow room. She will not be the first who was tamed in the witches' chamber."

"Satan," answered Paul shuddering.

"Hear me, young fop," hissed Pigavetta, "my patience is now at an end. You know what the consequences of your disobedience will be. What the judges will do with your bones I will not speak of, that is your affair and theirs. But what we shall do, that I can tell you. The order expels you, and do not believe that you will ever again find peace on earth. The sort of man you are, lies depicted in the archives of the Society, depicted by your own hand. Wherever you may seek shelter, service, position, fortune, your own confessions will testify against you.

Paul raised his head smiling: "That is all over, my good Sir, trouble yourself no longer, those bands are cut asunder. Since I no longer wish to pass off for a saint you can relate my sins to everyone. What was it that used formerly to terrify me? My childish confessions! Tell the gentlemen

in Venice that since through you I have blood on my conscience, the ink in which my weekly confessions were written has paled, they can cause them to be printed if it so pleases them, and I will relate in addition the services which under your guidance I have rendered to the Church."

"The Church expels you, accursed one."

"I have been expelled ever since I followed you," sighed Paul. "Since then I carry hell within me, and I now know that no priestly absolution inscribes me in the book of life, should I not be there, and no Priest blots out my name, once entered therein by the Grace of God."

"Thus is it with you!" said Pigavetta. "Have you also turned heretic? If the Holy Church is no longer anything to you, look at this corpse. Do you wish to end your days thus tortured?"

"My inward agonies," continued Paul inclining his head towards his heart, "will become less if you add to them the external sufferings of fire and steel. Spare your words, I have surrendered myself entirely to God's mercy."

"Heretic," hissed Pigavetta. Paolo remained silent. The old Jesuit sought some other argument by which he could convince the young fool, but at

that moment steps resounded outside. The length of the conference appeared suspicious to Master Ulrich and he stuck his head in at the door. Pigavetta turned to leave. "If the grounds do not appear obvious to you, this worthy gentleman will set you on the right track by means of thumb-screws and spanish boots."

"We'll twist him about so that the sun will shine through him," said the executioner grinning. The door closed and Paul remained alone in his agonizing posture.

CHAPTER XIII.

A RELIGIOUS discussion was being held in the new court of the Castle. The Rector of the University, two Professors of theology and two Jurists had entered into the Kurfürst's study to consult as to the advisability of receiving Erastus again as Church Counsellor and of repealing the sentence of excommunication. After some time Erastus himself was led out of his prison across the court. A deep-blue September sky looked down on the beauteous square surrounded by palaces. The lindens on the Bastion were already turning yellow, the asters bloomed in the beds surrounding the spring, the sparrows were besporting themselves in the trellis-work, and were fighting over the ripening grapes. Erastus gazed long and joyously about him and drew in long thirsty draughts the first delicious breath of freedom. Then he cast an astonished look at the "new building," which

owing to Felix's art had attained a beauty which it had never possessed before. "A worthy man," he said commendingly, "in spite of his brother." He then calmly ascended the well-known staircase leading to the chambers of his sovereign, where the discussion was to take place. Herr Bachmann stepped up respectfully to the liberated court physician, Erastus however held out his hand to the porter in his usual friendly manner.

Within the discussion was carried on long and eagerly, and Herr Bachmann tired of standing sat down with a sigh on a bench, saying: "It will be well when the old Counsellors once more meet together. The new always remain three times as long," and he dozed off. The good fellow was able to enjoy his nap thoroughly and then return to his waking condition with a feeling of comfort, which is ever the best part of an afternoon snooze. That day he had plenty of time to render his limbs supple by pacing up and down, for the members did not seem to be able to come to any decision. At last chairs and tables were pushed aside. "God be praised," said Bachmann, "this time they set hard to work." At the same moment the five professors appeared at the door; the Rector

Magnificus first with an air of importance suitable to his office, the Jurists with a somewhat mocking look of malicious joy, the Theologians with long faces and unusually green complexions. "The theological faculty always precedes," said the Rector with sarcastic politeness. The two men of God passed down the stairs before him without any acknowledgement. "Is the discussion at an end?" asked Bachmann modestly of the Rector. "At an end like my departed cousin," replied the jovial gentleman.

"And Herr Erastus," inquired the servant.

"Is once more, privy Counsellor, court physician, Church Counsellor."

"The great God in Heaven be praised," cried Bachmann. "These Italians were becoming unbearable. And the church discipline?" he added inquisitively.

"Aha, you are thinking of your cards and beer at the Hirsch. Well, the best of that bad joke is, that Herr Olevianus was obliged to mix much water with his wine. But still I would not advise you to rattle the dice in the Prince's ante-chamber."

Whilst the gentlemen were thus joking with

the servant, the Prince stood within with both his hands laid on Erastus' shoulders, saying to him in a kindly voice: "Can you forgive me, Erastus, for having treated you so badly?"

"Your Gracious Highness only fulfilled his duties as father of his dominions," replied Erastus modestly. "I have nothing to forgive."

"Be assured that only within the last few days have I thoroughly learned what a treasure I possessed in you. These religious men are all false. However cast down they might seem to appear at your disgrace, nevertheless a silent triumph shone through their ill-painted mask of sorrow. It is not to them, but only to the poor Italian crippled by the rack that we owe the solution of the game."

"To him," said Erastus astonished, "I always considered him to be the traitor."

"He may have been so at first; but immediately on his first trial, he told Pigavetta to his face, that he had compelled him as his Jesuit superior to write that letter to Neuser which was laid among your papers, and offered to immediately write such another which would resemble your handwriting just as well. The proof was not thoroughly con-

vincing because the poor man's arm was swollen through his sufferings and his hand trembled. Then it came to pass that they tortured him to the fourth degree, to extract a confession from him, that you had tried to talk him over to Arianism. He was also called upon to acknowledge that he attended with your daughter the witches' sabbath on the Holtermann, and executed his miracles and cures at Schönau by means of the black art. God knows, who instructed the old witch, but she said exactly what your enemies desired. She had seen at the last witches' sabbath on the Staffelstein near Bamberg a large black he-goat with fiery eyes, which came flying through the air from Heidelberg. A long broom stuck out of the animal's body behind, on which all the opponents of the Church discipline were seated, Probus and his wife, you and your fair child, Xylander and his maid and Pithopöus with his five lean daughters. Moreover she pretended to have seen you on the Holtermann, near the Three Oaks, the hollow Chestnut, the Linsenteich, and wherever the fiends besport themselves, where you drank in the sensuous love of the Devil, and where you last Saint John's day were baptized with blood, sulphur and salt, and

after the baptism the devil assumed the shape of a goat, on whom you all had to jump in turn with out-stretched legs."

"And those gentlemen could believe all that nonsense!" replied Erastus with a sad bend of his head.

"They believed it so firmly that nothing but the martyr-courage of the young Jesuit could save you. A veritable hero! The protocol of which I will however spare you the perusal seems to be describing the sufferings of some martyr. I am an old man, but I wept like a child, when I read here, what the poor man endured. Though they poured aquavitae on his back, which they then lit, and wrenched his limbs out of their sockets, he maintained his account that the old witch had recanted to him all that she had stated before her death. She had only accused you all to please the members of the Commission. He moreover stated that the executioner entered the room in the middle of the night and twisted the head of the old woman quite round, so as to be able to say that the Devil killed her. He however had recognized Master Ulrich and distinctly heard the wrenching of the bones. The Theologians were so

check-mated that they wished to torture him still more, but finally the order of trial occurred to the Jurists and they declared that he should not be tortured any further till new evidence should be brought against him. I then heard for the first time how the matter stood. I naturally at once deprived Hartmann of his office and ordered Pigavetta's arrest. The officers caught the Italian in his room as he was packing up. He must have remarked that there was an end to his latin. But they foolishly permitted him to change his clothes in a neighboring room. He very naturally did not return, and in his room they discovered a shaft with a pulley, which let him down in a moment to the lowest flight nearest to the front door. He is said to have played all sorts of pranks by means of this pulley, moreover the officers found other secret apparatus and magic books. If he be caught let him look out for the stake. He will not have tortured Laurenzano to pieces in vain if I can only lay my hand on him."

"The poor young man," sighed Erastus.

"There is something I wished to beg of you. The young Lazarus still lies in the Tower, as the physician of the hospital whom I sent to him, de-

clared, that he must not be moved. You are master of your art. My conscience would be much relieved if you could only manage to cobble him up again. I will look after his future welfare."

Erastus consented. He then begged that his daughter might be allowed to return to her home.

"That is a matter of course," answered the Kurfürst. "She is acquitted and need fear no further prosecution. The Theologians said something indeed about doing penance for going to the Holtermann at night, but the others maintained that if Lydia had thrown herself into the breach to save her father, she deserved praise from the pulpit, if however the young Parson had turned her head for one day, she had been more than sufficiently punished by the fright she had experienced."

"I should feel however much better satisfied," replied Erastus, "if Your Highness would distinctly tell the judges, that Lydia was no longer to be watched as a suspect, which generally happens after such an unfortunate charge."

"That I will," said the Kurfürst. "Your child shall be as free as the roe in the wood."

"I thank Your Grace. Now I may thoroughly rejoice in my freedom."

Soon after this father and daughter came out hand in hand from under the darksome portal of the Great Tower, and crossed the sunny court of the new building. Klytia saw with pride what Felix had done here, and when she found that her room had been aired and adorned with fresh flowers, she asked herself, why her thoughts remained so fixed on the prison of the priest, who after all had brought his fate upon himself, while tokens of Felix's love accompanied her wherever she went, even through the walls of the Great Tower. Had he not even risked his life in an attempt to set her free, as Frau Belier had once whispered to her? Nevertheless the look she gave the flowers was cold and inanimate, whilst she asked: "Where will you take him to?"

"Ah, the Magister meanest thou? I think Belier will not refuse to play the Samaritan's part. The patient can easily endure the short journey, and he will find no better care than there anywhere."

"Well, then I will run round to Frau Belier and prepare everything."

She was already down the stairs, and with a shake of his head the physician made ready to visit the sick man, who according to the Prince's account had been both his traitor and saviour. The poor man had been terribly punished, but Erastus could not yet pardon him for the danger into which he had brought Lydia.

CHAPTER XIV.

PAUL LAURENZANO was brought to the house on the marketplace in order to recover under the tender care of Erastus and Frau Belier from his severe wounds. "The burns," said the physician to Herr Belier, after that the patient had been put to bed in a room high above all noise from the street, "are bad but not mortal. When two thirds of the skin as in this case are uninjured the patient usually recovers. The joints are wrenched but not torn. He is young and will survive, still he must be a burden on you for some time, if he is not to suffer from the consequences for the rest of his life."

"No Huguenot ever considers one unjustly persecuted as a burden," said the Frenchman. "We know from experience what our duty requires."

Frau Belier cast the first kindly look at Felix

since the melancholy death of her parrot and said: "We shall soon have the poor young man up on his legs again."

"I shall have time to aid you, noble lady," replied the young Maestro, "I have been turned away from my work in the Castle."

"What! How ungrateful," cried Frau Belier and the others in one breath.

"The Kurfürst must have been told to whom the reverend Parson Neuser owed through a lucky *qui pro quo* his escape. He paid me off and ordered me at the same time to give up the plans of the Castle, I also received a hint that in consequence of suspicious proceedings in connection with Neuser's flight all foreigners had to leave the castle."

"I cannot blame the noble gentleman," said Erastus. "He is naturally of a mild disposition; spring cannot be milder. He would only have punished Vehe and Suter by banishment, and he would have even forgiven Neuser; it is quite proper that he should not permit any interference in his affairs. It may be presumed that our friend would have had to pay dearer for his gymnastics, were it not that the kind-hearted man is weary of punish-

ing, so that the daring brother escapes through Paul's sufferings."

"It is the same with him as with me," replied Felix with a smiling side glance at the plump hostess. "Had I not slaked my Neapolitan thirst for blood on the parrot, neither this Hartmanni, nor Master Ulrich, nor Pigavetta would have lived longer."

"Private justice is not necessary in this country, my dear friend," said Erastus. "Pigavetta will be prosecuted by law. The Magistrate is *ab officio* suspended, and punishment will be meted out to the other wretches for their misdeeds."

"Would that Paul could only get the use of his limbs again by this means," said Felix sighing.

"Remain with us, Master Laurenzano," said Belier, "and watch over your brother. You can have a room near the beloved patient, and there work at the plans of my new house. That is a quiet, serious occupation which cannot disturb the sick man, and on the other hand the stillness of the sick-room will be agreeable to your Muse. Design there the façade, and therein strive to emulate that of the building of the deceased Count

Palatine, that is naturally, in so far as the house of a private citizen can vie with that of a prince."

"Take now the hand of reconciliation," said Frau Belier. "There shall no longer be any blood between us, I forgive you the death of the poor parrot."

The architect seized the hand with a look of comical contrition. "I cannot order masses to be read for the rest of the soul of one nipped in the flower of his youth," he said, "but I will immortalise him on the façade, and erect a monument to him in spite of many Counts."

While they were all thus joking together and forming plans for the future, Klytia slipped quietly away. This merriment after the dreadful visitations of the previous days grieved the kind-hearted child, and she went upstairs to sit with the nurse, so as to be able to listen to Paul's heavy breathing and feverish fantasies, in the room next to his. His eyes gleamed like those of a prophet, his cheeks were tinged with a feverish glow and an unearthly beauty had come over his idealised features. His lips moved unceasingly, and it seemed as if the fever had caused the long suppressed desire for com-

panionship of this reserved man to burst all sluices. Earliest impressions of youth were by this revolution of his mental and physical life once more called to life. He spoke oftenest with his mother calling her by pet names. "I shall certainly never lie again," he said in the convinced tone of a small child, calling tears to Lydia's eyes. Klytia herself was ever prominent in his fantasies as a sister. "I really did not intend to do Lydia any harm, Mother," he said. "I only wished to kiss her. Is that wrong?" and so saying he tossed about. "If I were only not obliged to return to that horrid school. But I will pretend to be as stupid as Bernardo the hunch-back, then they will certainly expel me and say they do not require me any longer." After a while he would cry out: "But mother says I ought never to pretend." The terrors of the last days curiously enough seemed to have made hardly any impression on his mind. He only once said: "It is very well, that they beat me in this manner, now it is all over and no one can again reproach me for anything." In general all his worst impressions were connected with the school at Venice. Pigavetta was a wicked teacher, Ulrich the executioner was the "brother corrector," the

Church counsellors represented the collegium of professors, the remembrance of the present seemed on the other hand to be entirely wiped away from his memory. But once only, as Felix sat at his bed-side, did it seem to recur to him. With an expression of the most intense moral fear he called out: "Save the parsons." Felix then stooped over him and whispered in his ear: "I have freed Neuser, and the others have been pardoned." "Oh!" sighed the sick man as if relieved of a heavy burden and casting a piteously grateful look at his brother. From that time his restlessness seemed to lessen gradually. His strained expression disappeared. It was replaced by excessive weakness. So soon as he awoke his nurse brought him some nourishment, his wounds were dressed afresh, after which he immediately sank into his somnolent state.

Felix had arranged his atelier near to Paul's bedroom and worked quietly and diligently at his plans for Belier's new house. Klytia took her place as nurse in the room between them so often as her duties towards her father allowed her, and Frau Belier repeatedly put the searching question to her towards which of the two rooms did her heart most incline. Paul's presence had in fact the same in-

fluence on Klytia's tender heart as formerly, without however detracting from her feelings of gratitude and tender friendship towards Felix. In nursing Paul she often met Felix and they neither seemed ever to consider the question as to what should take place after Paul's recovery. Felix however felt more and more distinctly that he loved the maiden in reality only from an artistic point of view. His fiery nature required a counterfoil, which would oppose a greater vivacity and capacity of contradiction than was to be met with in Erastus' tender hearted daughter. The daily scimmages which he had with Frau Belier, in which like two children with locked hands they endeavored each to bring the other to its knees, developed his own inward strength rather than any quiet thoughtful conversation with the German maiden. He was wont to watch with artistic delight Lydia as sitting at her work she pondered over her past or her future. It was impossible to have gazed on a more lovely picture of a maiden mind buried in the sweet dream of the love of a young life. The brow wrapt in thought, the mouth puckered up as if seeking a kiss, the blooming cheeks, the full development of bust, on which nature had lavished its riches with a

bounteous hand, formed a finished picture of beauty irresistible to the artist nature in Felix. He quietly brought out one day a lump of modelling clay, and whilst Lydia was sitting without any misgivings at her work near the window, and dreamily listening to the breathing of the patient, the young artist kneaded the plastic material and soon completed an exact portrait of the thoughtful maiden. He formed the base as the calix of a flower as he had seen in the antique busts in Rome and Florence. The scented calix out of which Klytia arose was intended as a symbol of the dreamy flower-life of young love, of the tender perfume full of misgivings of a pure woman's mind, whose life is in part the existence of a plant. Lydia became aware at last of what he was doing, as the young Maestro looked intently at her, and then stepping to one side appeared to be busy on some unusual piece of work. She arose and a look of maidenlike severity came over her face on beholding a too faithful representation of her charms. "Fie, how wrong," she blushingly exclaimed. But the artist begged her so touchingly to resume her seat and let him continue that she finally resigned herself. "What can I otherwise grant him," she thought sadly, "when the

heart belongs to the other." The artist carefully examined each particular feature. "God never created anything more beautiful than thou art," he said. When he had finished he clapped his hands together, and repeated "splendid, splendid" half aloud. She now stepped up quietly to him. "What mean those leaves?"

"I have moulded thee as Goddess of flowers," he answered.

"As *Wegewarte*?" She looked up towards him with a sad smile. He however lightly kissed her pure forehead: "As Klytia turning towards her Sun-God." She held out her hand to him, and looked up gratefully into his eyes. He pressed it as if bidding her farewell. Without that a single word passed between them, they understood one another. Klytia was free, he himself had released her from her promise.

She now went oftener than ever to the couch of the sick brother, cooled his brow with damp cloths and bound up his wounds with the delicate, apt hands of a woman.

Thus passed away peacefully the last sunny days of autumn, leaving to all the inhabitants of the gable-house the precious impression, that there

was even something beautiful in the stillness of a sick-room, in which no sounds were heard but the regular breathings of the patient, the ticking of the large Nuremberg clock in the ante-chamber, and the buzzing of the gnats on the diamond panes reflecting the sun. However little the relations of the various persons seemed to have changed outwardly, Erastus nevertheless felt the magnetic deviation which had taken place in Lydia. Wearied from many visits, he sat down one afternoon with his daughter near the chapel on the other side of the bridge to enjoy the last sunny hours of the fleeting year. The Heidelberg woods lay before them tinged with yellow, and their serrated lines blue and indistinct melted away as some old poetic saw in the autumn mist causing the mountains to appear higher than usual. Near to the bench on which they sat, the blue flower bloomed by the wayside and ever turned its calix to the sun. Lydia plucked one and pondered over the world of experiences she had lived through in the short time since Felix had related to her the fable out of Ovid. Her father looked steadily at her and said: "Hast thou broken thy bonds towards Felix?"

"Felix remains a Papist," she answered eva-

sively. "He cannot fulfil the conditions which thou hast laid upon him."

"I release him from them," said Erastus. "Are we not all Papists since we have Olevianus as our Pope, execute heretics, and that Theologians assume to themselves not only the authority of Princes, but also that of heads of houses, and fathers of families? Hardly any trace is left of the freedom which Luther and Zwingli sought to introduce."

"Dost thou permit me then to marry a Catholic?"

"What right would I have to forbid? So often as I pass the square on which was spilt the blood of my friend, the very stones cry out to me, 'thou hypocrite, in what art thou better than the Caraffas?' The officium of the Calvinists has rendered me lenient towards index and inquisition."

"And wilt thou be equally lenient," asked Lydia timidly, "if I marry Paul?"

Erastus looked at her in amazement: "How? After that he plunged us all in this misery, can'st thou not sever thy heart from him?"

"Ask this flower why it follows the course of the sun," said Lydia, "it cannot do otherwise."

"But how can'st thou prefer the horrible Priest, this pale man broken down in health to the straightforward, happy young Maestro?"

"I know not," said the maiden thoughtfully. "This love has deeper roots than those of reason. In what does it consist? Merely in my love for him, in that I cannot tear myself away from him. Not because he is handsomer or wiser than others am I his, but only because I cannot live away from him, because he is my Sun, without whom I should wither away as does this flower in winter;" and she silently dried the tears which rose to her eyes.

"He has suffered too severely for our sakes," answered Erastus after a few moments of thought, "for me to say nay. It is God's decree, His will be done."

CHAPTER XV.

SLOWLY was the patient of the gable-house moving towards convalescence. His wounds still smarted, and any motion caused him pain, but he bore all his sufferings with the greatest composure, and to his brother's inquiry he answered with a grateful look: "*Sto bene.*" Klytia also who continued to nurse him with a certain diffidence, he ever greeted with a look of deep gratitude. In the weak condition in which he now found himself all natural passion, force of character, and love of the artificial seemed to have left him; he was kinder and more simple than he had ever been before; fictitiousness, nonsense and bombast had fallen away from him. The brilliant personality of the Italian *savant*, which spreads a shimmer of eloquence over the most unimportant theme, and loves to express epigrammatically the most common place subject, had been replaced by a poor suffering man. He

was no longer the *primus omnium* of the college at Venice whose mouth overflowed with wisdom. Rather was there something childlike in his helplessness. He modestly held back, although all interest was centred on him. His gratitude for any attention, his respect for Belier's and Erastus' learning, his unassuming attention caused him to resemble a mere boy. Now only could one perceive how young he really was. When Frau Belier passionately exclaimed at the sight of his wounds he meekly answered: "I wished to do the same to others, who were better than I, noble Lady, and whose sins were less clear of proof than mine." He took part in conversation only when directly questioned, but listened eagerly when Erastus or Belier discussed Church matters, or when Felix and the mistress of the house violently argued about nothing, whilst Lydia quietly glided through the room like a sunbeam and by her noiseless activity gave to the whole a tone of beauty and individual coloring. When Paul at last supported by Erastus and his brother was led to an arm-chair and thus enabled to join for hours the family circle, they all expected that his former originality and mental superiority would show itself once

again. But he remained silent, gentle and as if apparently inwardly crushed. This resignation on the part of his brother finally appeared serious to Felix. It was something so utterly opposed to the fiery disposition of the young artist that he said to himself: "His limbs will be cured, of that Erastus is certain, but his nature is broken, like those of the few victims of the inquisition I saw in Rome, who were suffered to return to public life."

"I do not like to see thee so wise and genuine," he said one day to Paul, as the family were expending their wrath on the subject of some fresh molestation on the part of the Theologians, whilst Paul endeavored kindly and quietly to place their intentions in a better light. "It seems as if thou couldest no longer punish evil."

"That may be the case," answered the sick man. "I see no crime committed that I myself might not have committed. What should our failings teach us, but charity towards others?"

Klytia herself had become another person, since Paul had so retired within himself. Quiet and reserved she went her way. She seemed to be satisfied with being able to serve him, to provide

for all things, but the joyous childish smile had left her face. Felix who was working at her marble bust, found, when she sat for him, a melancholy trait in her reverie, which had formerly not existed. "She looks like some young widow, who mournfully ponders over her departed joy. But I will soon rouse the foolish children out of their unbearable reserve and self-sacrifice." One day that he found his brother sitting alone near the window of his oaken-panelled room, gazing with longing look out of the diamond panes over the gables of the houses towards the Heiligenberg, as if counting each individual pine, which seemed to detach itself from the white clouds behind, the opportunity appeared favorable to the artist.

"Thou must be digging out a new philosophy, Paolo," he said laughing, "that thou gazest up for hours at the blue October sky."

"I see no necessity for one," replied Paul wearily. "Resignation is true philosophy and life itself teaches us that."

"Why must thou be resigned? Thou seemest to have made a pact with Lydia of mutual self-sacrifice."

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A flaming color spread suddenly over the patient's pale face. "Why dost thou hide thyself behind the clouds, thou love-sick Apollo, and sufferest thy flower to mourn? Must I take her by the hand and lead her to thee?"

Paul made a motion of grief. "Thou would'st sacrifice thyself, my good Felix," he cried, "but how could I accept such a sacrifice?"

"Sacrifice," said the Maestro, merrily cocking his Raphael cap to one side. "We artists are terrible sinners. Since I have modelled the pure face, since I have caught the determined look on her lips and have spitted it in marble, like a butterfly stuck through with a pin, my heart has as much abandoned her as any other model with which I have succeeded, and it seems to me as if I had almost too much of the dear child. I dream of a less gentle, less pliant being, allotted to me by heaven, a Neapolitan woman with hooked nose, black eyes, and sharp claws at the end of her fore-paws. In a word I will paint Lydia on a church banner for the Scalzi, but will as soon marry her as the Madonna. I want a wife with whom I can quarrel."

Paul shook his head sadly: "Even if that were

the case, how can one tainted by suspicion, a racked cripple, a walking corpse stretch out his arms towards this young sweet life? It would indeed be a crime."

At that minute a young pale head bowed down over him, fresh warm lips were fastened on his pale mouth. "I will never nurse any but this patient," she said in a low trembling voice.

"Lydia," cried Paolo in his delight. "Thou art willing to bind thy happy destiny to that of a cripple?"

"I shall make him once more as healthy and frolicsome as the squirrel on the tops of the trees," joyously laughed Klytia. A sunbeam of joy passed over the face of the pale man. The artist retired however to his studio, turned the marble bust with its face to the wall, and began assiduously to work at the façade of Herr Belier's future house.

"Hast thou in truth chosen the Papist, the stranger as the companion of thy life-time?" asked Erastus with a grave shake of the head, as Klytia with her arm wound round Paul announced her determination to her father.

"His land shall be my land and his God shall

be my God," replied Klytia with an inward joy, which Erastus knew he could not oppose.

"I did not wish to mix the things of this world with those of another," now said Paul modestly, "otherwise I should have told you that I cannot return to the old Communion. Before this I used to rage against your church, which broke down the altars, and laid waste the sacred places; but you have one great advantage over us, you have no slaves. Moreover dogma has no longer for me the same importance that it used to have. Each of us strove after the right doctrine, but who can tell in this day of shattering of opinions and ideas what the right doctrine may be? You persecuted the Baptists and Arians owing to true principles. The Calvinists persecuted you, the Palatines hate both Zwingliites and Lutherans. I however hated all Baptists, Zwingliites, Lutherans and Calvinists. We have all steeped ~~our~~ hands in blood in honor of that God who said to us: 'thou shalt not kill.' If we continue in this way, soon in this beautiful land the groans of the tortured and the blood of the slain will cry to heaven as in the Netherlands and in France, and what that may mean, is only known to one who may have experienced it on his

own body. One must have looked the most terrible death in the face, to be convinced, how small in reality is the belief for the which we are ready to die. As lately I was pondering over in my prison: Who can indeed possess a certain and sure promise of the Spirit, that his doctrine is of God, where then in the ocean of deceit is the safe rock on which we may take a firm foothold? The words of a heretic whom I formerly deeply despised came uppermost to me. That Baptist whom you yourself know. 'The Spirit,' he cried once to me, 'exists not outwardly in dogma and in *cultus*, but only in the life. Then only does it appear in that one sees, feels and hears it. We know more certainly the right that should be done, than the right that should be taught. Therefore true belief is this, that you do the will of God, not that you revolve principles of dogma concerning things invisible which are not of man but of God.' At that time I covered my ears with my hands, so as not to hear such blasphemous arguments, but they came back to me in the stillness of the prison. When the witch acknowledged that she had never seen the devil, for the which we burnt her, the idea stirred me to the roots of my heart, for what uncertainties

we often commit a certain wrong. All our errors arise from our thinking too much of God's honor, too little of his law, speak too much of the invisible world, too little of the visible. We were pious because we murdered for the sake of another world; we were pleasing in God's sight because for the other world we lied, deceived and led men astray, and because we made our love of power and right the affair of the Deity, all our other sins should therefore be pardoned. Our care for that unknown world has led us to despise this visible one. To become angels in heaven, we were ravening wolves on earth. Only when I thought over the word which the heretic had called out to me: 'The spirit is nowhere visible but in the life,' then only did the scales fall from my eyes, and I determined to commit the doctrines of God into God's own hands, and to do in this life, what he had plainly revealed to me in heart and by word."

Erastus returned no answer, as Herr Belier came in with Xylander who wished to greet Erastus. After a time they were joined by Felix, who within the last few days had looked less cheerful than usual. "Our friend would leave us," said the

Huguenot. "He goes first to Innsbruck to visit Master Colins and then returns to Naples. In vain I have begged him to renounce papistry; he declares that he will not cut himself off from his people, and that art-loving Italy will never raise itself to our worship of God in Spirit and in Truth."

"You are right," said Erastus kindly. "We cannot make use of the Papal Church as it now is and the Italians cannot use our churches as they now are. It is sufficient for us to think out our thoughts and to act accordingly, the Italians wish them represented before them sensuously. Perhaps the time may come when this dissonance solves itself into a higher harmony, as Lydia once said, in which the white surplices and black gowns will be as much things of the past as are to-day Garizim und Moriah, or the disputes of the Levites and Samaritans, nevertheless I fear that the day is much further off than Lydia thinks. But we have indeed the promises of a time, when there will be no temple and no priest and I believe that the world will give a sigh of relief when the last Theologian has been buried." "I should myself like to be standing by that grave," said Xylander viva-

ciously. "I would place with this humanitarian all the implements with which he worked, his symbolical books, bishops' mitres, pitch torches, the pears of torture, and a bit of Sylvan's bloody shirt which was wickedly sent to me on the day after the poor man's death. They would trumpet in the next world that Kalchas and Teiresias, Augurs and Haruspices were soft-hearted fellows in comparison with those who came after them. When I consider the amount of blood that has been shed since the days of Constantine to the present time, I wish that a Church had never existed!" "No," replied Erastus, "it was not my meaning that we should overthrow the Church because the priests do not satisfy us. That would be like tearing down a house, because the owner was not popular. We must only place it in other hands, rule it in a different manner, and for this reform, which is so necessary, I know of no better fundamental doctrine than that, which Magister Paul intends to preach for the future, that the Spirit exists only outwardly in one way, and that is in the Life."

"I hope sincerely," said Felix turning to his brother, "that thou are not serious in wishing to spend thy days in misery in this land of fogs, and

in cold churches without music, to waste thy life full of hope in fruitless preachings unaided by art? No, come with me. Thou art an Italian and can'st not live without the aesthetic, and if thou remainest, wilt soon enough have to sing out the *super flumina Babylonis*."

"No Felix," said Paul in a determined tone. "As the choice lies open to me: rather no music, no pictures, not even laurel hedges and gardens of the Hesperides, than any return to the old pool of sulphur."

"And dost thou really wish to die a Calvinistic preacher?"

Paul was silent for a while, then modestly answered: "The moment I regained my consciousness I said daily to myself: Away with the cowl. A profession which requires us to appear better than other men, easily renders us much worse. Moreover I felt, that after the miseries which I have survived, many a temptation is left behind—and finally what otherwise should I become, dost thou think?"

"Teacher, Magister, Doctor," enumerated the artist quickly.

"I have experienced too much that is serious

to be anything else than a preacher. Shall I mend up the mutilated verses of old poets? or tinker together the fragments of some forgotten sophist? or pile up some other learned dung-heap? Whosoever has experienced what I have, can no longer choose the embellishments of life as the centre of his existence. My thoughts cleave to the core of life, bitter as it may be; that will I make the substance of my labours. I will beg the Kurfürst to appoint me to some quiet parish, hidden away in the furthestmost wooded valley of his dominions. There I will teach children to fold their little hands, advise parents how to guard their children's hearts, strengthen husbands and wives in their good intentions, sustain the weak, guide the erring into the ways of peace. And if I have watched over the smallest congregation in this land like a good shepherd, so that it returns after my preaching happier and better qualified to the work and burden of life, finding itself more reconciled and meek under trials, comforted in all sorrow, then I will have a fuller certainty that my life has not been lived in vain, than if boys were reading my edition of the poets, or doctors naming a dogma after me. I do not wish to

be renowned but forgotten. The children and the neighbours only will know of me, and I feel certain that my bride longs for such a modest existence."

Klytia leant tenderly over him and gazed into his eyes. Felix alone did not seem to approve that the end of such a great beginning should be a hidden Hyperborean village. The Magister however leant his hand affectionately on his brother's shoulder and said: "My good Felix, be assured that the Parson Paul will be a happier man than ever the Magister Laurenzano was, and the fame of our noble race may be safely entrusted to thy artistic hands."

"See the creation of our new Michel Angelo," cried Herr Belier, unfolding a plan of the new house which was to replace the old gable house on the market. A shout of delight escaped them all.

"How grandly story is piled on story," said Erastus, "up to the proud gable, which shows the world the armour in the which our valiant friend fought so stoutly. And here is the shield of the Beliers and the faithful portrait of our host."

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the little woman, "there is even my poor parrot on my wrist. The sacri-

ficial lamb which redeemed the blood from our house."

"Here, Herr Belier," said the delighted Felix, "have I left an empty frieze for you to add in your device."

"Be that the artist's part," replied the chivalrous Huguenot. Felix bent his head thoughtfully and casting a loving look at Klytia, mindful of his brother's hard won fortune, he gaily seized the pencil and wrote in large letters: "*Perstat invicta Venus!*"

THE END.

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